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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE IMPACT OF CHILDREN ON THE HOUSEHOLD DIVISION OF LABOUR AND LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION: AN EMPIRICAL TEST OF A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

BY

Deborah Hurst Usher

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
SPRING, 1991

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ISBN 0-315-66652-8

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DEGREE: MASTER OF ARTS

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1991

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ENTITLED THE IMPACT OF CHILDREN ON THE HOUSEHOLD DIVISION OF LABOUR AND LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION: AN EMPIRICAL TEST OF A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

SUBMITTED BY DEBORAH HURST USHER

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

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To Bob James and Lorna Marsden,
who gave me my wings and showed
me that I could fly.

ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that the introduction of children into a relationship often precipitates a task-demand crisis which results in the household division of labour shifting toward more traditional patterns of behaviour. This shift not only overburdens the female role from a task standpoint; it also reduces the perceived legitimacy of her labour force participation. These inequities are supported and reinforced by traditional gender-role beliefs that reflect both prior socialization of the individuals involved and the effects of values and expectations embedded in the current societal structure.

The main relationships suggested by the theoretical framework are explored using recent survey data collected from a random sample of 250 Alberta couples. Although the cross-sectional research design does not permit causal inferences to be directly tested, a number of results indicate support for the model.

First, women with young children are those most likely to report difficulty in balancing work and family demands. Second, that they are expected to take on more traditional roles when young children are present is seen as evidence of the strength of gender-role ideology coming into play at this stage. Third, multivariate analyses demonstrate that the presence of young children in the household is the most important variable with respect to predicting the household division of labour. Transference onto labour market behaviours is also apparent. In general, it is the legitimacy of the woman's employment which is more often called into question when

children are present and difficulties balancing work and family begin to emerge.. The movement to a more traditional household division of labour is moderated by socio-economic status, however.

Putting the child at the centre of research linking attitudes about appropriate household division of labour and behavioural outcomes in the home and workplace can assist us in explaining the strength of traditional patriarchal attitudes and behaviours. Given the resulting negative impact of these behaviours on woman's career opportunities, the thesis concludes with a discussion of policy alternatives which might limit the impact of the task-demand crisis, and move societal expectations away from traditional models.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have decided to begin my acknowledgements in a nostalgic frame of mind and recount my most frequent dream between 1976 and 1986. As I sat at a desk working as a clerk-analyst for General Motors, I would dream that one day I would graduate with an advanced degree and then people would listen and take seriously what I had to say. I didn't tell anyone of my daydreams then, for I felt sure everyone would laugh at my 'silly notions.' This all changed when I decided to return to the University of Toronto as a full-time student. I met Bob James and Lorna Marsden. These two professors not only listened to me but encouraged me to elaborate and treated me as a person capable of bringing something of value to the field. This was a new experience for me and it represented a major turning point in my life. I have often wanted to let Bob and Lorna know what an enormous impact they have had on my life and how grateful I am to them. Thank you to them both for listening, never doubting my abilities, motivations or dreams, and for helping me to leave southern Ontario during the summer crisis of 1988, to set my feet upon the path to my most outrageous dream yet.

I would also like to thank several people in my more immediate and current environment, for this thesis could not have been completed without their help. I would like to begin with an extra special thank-you to my thesis supervisor, Harvey Krahn, for his many, but appreciated, 'red-pen' comments throughout the development of my thesis. I also want to thank him for his support, understanding, and encouragement and for his insistence on giving

me the benefit of the doubt during these last three years at the University of Alberta. I would also like to thank the members of my thesis committee: Graham Lowe, Susan McDaniel and Brenda Munroe, for their helpful comments on the thesis.

Next, I would like to acknowledge my new friends and colleagues in the Sociology Department at the University of Alberta, especially my office mates and those belonging to the Sociology of Work group. I am particularly grateful to David Ashton, Ayse Oncü and Alan Law, friends who shared with me in the original vision of the work group and helped to make it a success. This group provided a comfortable forum for trying out ideas and learning of other research interests close to my own.

And last, but by no means least, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of those closest to me. Thank you first to my dear soul-mates Jan Ellis, Robyn Shiels and Norman Hurst who, from a distance, have provided me with emotional support above and beyond the call of duty. Thanks also to my Mom and Dad, Cecelia and Ron Hurst, who throughout my life have taught me about commitment and passion for what one truly believes. And thanks to my sisters, Laura, Annette and Mary, who have tried in their own way to fathom the depths of my obsessions.

Next, a special thank-you to my partner John, who, whether or not it was his intent, has participated in a renegotiated division of household labour during much of this project. And, while the division of labour he experienced was not exactly 'egalitarian', I want to let him know that it was his willingness to 'pick up the slack' that has made the difference in my

ability to complete my thesis this year. And finally, I want to thank my sweet babies, Ryan and Stephanie, who continue to teach me about life, love and why I have to get through the day.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This thesis builds on literature in the sociology of work and the sociology of the family concerning the 'double day' of paid and unpaid labour. It also draws from labour market economics research concerning the 'segregated labour market.' It is important for these different areas to be drawn together so that the specific topic of interest in the thesis can be properly addressed, that is, the impact that young children have on a couple's household division of labour and subsequent labour force behaviours. The typical division of labour after a child is born is one where a woman performs a larger share of household tasks. The resultant 'overload' or 'double day' experienced by many women must necessarily affect career aspirations and behaviours.

The segregated labour market tends to have similar effects. Women of childbearing age are often considered to be less desirable employees because of anticipated career interruptions due to childbirth and lack of occupational commitment due to childrearing. Another assumption is also often made about working mothers. It is assumed that they do not 'need' to work and that their true occupational commitment is to their family roles. These assumptions act to construct expectations regarding working mothers' reduced commitments and hence, barriers to equality of opportunity in the labour force.

These attitudinal barriers and their supporting assumptions are often referred to as 'traditional' gender-role ideology. Traditional ideology assumes as 'natural' the male breadwinner and female homemaker/child care-giver roles. Societal expectations and values about traditional gender-roles have an effect at the individual level because these expectations and values are built into and are supported by the larger social structure.

These traditional gender-role beliefs contrast to liberal ideas often espoused by Canadians. A liberal meritocratic ideology assumes that all individuals, regardless of their social category membership, are free to choose and pursue any course of action, and that success is linked only to individual determination and hard work Liberal ideology rests on the premise that the individual is more important than society and that society does not have the right to limit his/her freedom to pursue happiness as she or he chooses to define it. Individuals who fail in their pursuits, according to this view, must attribute their failures to their own shortcomings (Marchak, 1981).

The main ideas underlying liberal/meritocratic and traditional gender-role value systems are basically contradictory. The central contradiction becomes most visible when young children are present. The presence of a young child brings to the surface strong traditional ideas about what it means to be a mother or a father.

These traditional ideas are unrealistic in our current society. Yet, they continue to be perpetuated from one generation to the next. They are transmitted to individuals throughout their lives via family socialization and daily experiences with social institutions such as the education system and the media. These internalized and

externally supported ideas act to shape individuals at every stage of their life course. But it is the stage when young children arrive that is critical for revealing the contradictory messages of the two value systems - the traditional gender-role values being much more pervasive and deeply rooted than the liberal beliefs which are often more superficial. The presence of children reveals and aggravates the fundamental inequities in the domestic division of labour and more generally, our society. Prior to having a child, many couples may not be aware of, or even concerned about their domestic division of labour. Once a child is born, however, previous arrangements often fall apart as couples try to sort out who will be responsible for the many new childcare tasks that demand to be done. The arrival of children in a household frequently precipitates a 'task-demand crisis.'.

Research on the 'double day' and the gender-segregated labour market reveal that it is usually the woman who performs most or all of the new childcare tasks in addition to other household tasks. What I am suggesting in this thesis is that parenting precipitates a 'task-demand' crisis for many young mothers, but not necessarily young fathers.

Chapter two begins by surveying the literature on the factors contributing to this 'task-demand' crisis. This includes current research on the household division of labour, family and occupational life-course stages, the origins of gender-role identities, and the external constraints which maintain these identities. Chapter two concludes by drawing all of these factors together into an integrated conceptual framework. The 'task-demand' crisis is described and research questions that address the framework's main relationships are put forward for exploration.

Chapter three describes the methods used in the survey data collection and the dependent and independent variables used in this analysis. In Chapter four, the results are presented and discussed. This chapter begins by looking at gender-role attitudes and traditional behaviours. The main behaviour of interest is the household division of labour. The data analyses demonstrate how gender, women's labour force status and the presence of children affect the division of labour. But, these variables affect more than just the division of labour. For dual-earner families, the demands of the 'double day' are explored by looking closely at how the presence of children can lead to stress and difficulties balancing work and family demands.

Finally, chapter five addresses the implications of the findings and how they contribute to both the existing literature on the 'double day' and gender-segregated labour market. The discussion then turns to social policies and programs that might improve the situation

Thus, this thesis makes its contribution by using a feminist perspective to link literature from sociology of work, sociology of the family and labour market economics within a single conceptual framework. The degree to which the arrival of a young child can bring out traditional gender-role behaviours is the important link between these bodies of literature. The second contribution of this thesis is that it tests some important relationships implied in the theoretical framework with recent survey data collected from a recent random sample of Alberta couples.

CHAPTER 2

THE TASK-DEMAND CRISIS

2.1 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO A TASK-DEMAND CRISIS

Over the last thirty years, women have moved into the labour force in ever-increasing numbers (Boyd, 1984). In fact, by 1988, 53% of all Canadian women were in the workforce. The largest increase occurred in the 25-64 year group, particularly among married women with children. Of married women at work in 1989, 57% had children under age six and employed husbands (Parliament, 1989a). Thus in Canada today, the dual-earner family has largely replaced the 'traditional' family of the 1950's which consisted of a female homemaker, a male breadwinner, and their children. By 1986, 62% of Canadian husband-wife families were dual-earner families and only 27% were traditional families (Moore, 1989).

These trends demonstrate a greater integration of women into the paid labour force, but they do not signify a balanced occupational distribution of men and women. In fact the labour force is highly segregated. A large part of the growth in female employment opportunities is directly attributable to the increased number of part-time positions (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1988), particularly in the service sector (Parliament, 1989a; Krahn and Lowe, 1988). In addition, few women work outside of 'traditional' female jobs. For example, 73% of Canadian women are concentrated in clerical, service, sales, teaching and health care jobs. Clerical jobs are occupied by the greatest number of female employees. Related to the segregated nature of women's

employment is yet another pervasive characteristic of the contemporary labour market - the female-male wage gap. Currently women earn, on average, 66% of what men earn (Parliament, 1989b).

Coincident with the increased participation of women in the labour force has been the development of legislation discouraging gender-based discrimination in hiring and promotion decisions. Institutionalized daycare, education and training opportunities for women, and pay and employment equity policies have, to some extent, reduced gender-based inequality in the workplace. Such policies and legislation represent major improvements (Boyd, 1984). They also suggest that, to some extent, attitudes about women's traditional roles have changed and have become more egalitarian. But despite the positive changes in government policy and legislation, and the dramatic increase in the number of females in the labour force, serious inequities and barriers to women remain.

In this thesis I will highlight further evidence of systemic gender-based inequality by examining patterns of household division of labour among couples with and without children present. Inequalities show up equally clearly at this level of analysis. Women continue to bear primary responsibility for housework and childcare (Hessing, 1988; Michaelson, 1985; Parliament, 1989) regardless of their labour force activities. It is especially important to question assertions of movement toward a more egalitarian society when we consider the 'double day' of work required of many women and the difficulties they encounter in balancing their work and family responsibilities.

2.1 HOUSEHOLD DIVISION OF LABOUR

While liberal ideology points to equal opportunity, we live in a society where opportunities are a function of social category membership (Marchak, 1981). The most obvious example is that of gender. In her study of Gallup polls between 1962 and 1983, Boyd (1984) highlights two aspects of inequality which suggest the operation of a patriarchal ideology (Walby, 1981) rather than an egalitarian or liberal ideology. First, many Canadians consider women with pre-school children less acceptable as labour force participants, even though women with children under three years of age are the fastest growing labour force group (Lowe and Krahn, 1985). Second, women remain primarily responsible for the greater share, if not all, of domestic/household labour. Little appears to have changed in the past few years. In a 1989 study commissioned by the Alberta government, these two areas of prominent concern were again noted by respondents (Alberta Women's Secretariat, 1989). In a 1989 Gallup Poll, the majority of Canadians (56%), including a majority of women (52%), agreed that married women should not work when they have small children. Maternal employment is considered by many Canadians to have a harmful effect on family life (Bozinoff and MacIntosh, 1989). The same poll showed that 57% of Canadian men were willing to let women work and get ahead in their careers, but only if they continued to do all the domestic work at home.

We can see from these poll results that patriarchal ideology is embodied by gender role attitudes which direct our attention to the needs of young children while ignoring the needs of women assigned to the parenting role. This patriarchal orientation does not even begin to question the male 'breadwinner' role. In short,

women are subordinated in the home and in the labour force due to the strength of patriarchal ideological forces (Walby, 1986).

What this means, according to Michaelson (1985), is that women with children work approximately 9 3/4 hours of paid and domestic labour each day. The 1986 Canadian General Social Survey indicated that men spend more time than women working for pay (75 minutes extra per day). This is largely attributable to the fact that more men work full-time. Women spend more time on traditional family-care activities such as cleaning and meal preparation. Total family-care time of employed men equalled 1.47 hours per day, compared to employed women's time of 3.13 hours per day (Parliament, 1989b). The extra time women contribute to domestic work, compared to their male counterparts, is equal to an extra month of 24 hour work days each year (Hochschild, 1989). While some men do participate in housework, few regularly share responsibility for this work. Wives feel 'lucky' if their male partners do participate (Hochschild, 1989).

But some evidence suggests small changes in male and female domestic work divisions (Stebbins, 1988). Women's participation in homework has actually dropped by 8 hours per week over the past few decades whereas men's participation has increased from 5 to 7 hours (Robinson, 1986). However, the increase in male participation is in the area of traditional male chores such as home repair and lawn care (Robinson, 1986). As for women, standards of cleanliness may have relaxed (Jones, et.al., 1990). Perhaps the reduction in time spent on housework can also be traced to the introduction of labour-saving devices such as dishwashers and microwave ovens.

It may simply be that with more women in the paid labour force, there is less time for cleaning as well as other duties.

Nonetheless women are still primarily responsible for the traditional female tasks of housework and childcare, while men look after the traditional male tasks of earning and household maintenance. These gender-based household roles reflect an earlier economic era. Full-time motherhood and housewifery is not the main occupation of most women today (Gee and Kimball, 1987). Instead, most women are combining paid employment and family responsibilities (Bielby and Bielby, 1989).

2.1.2 FAMILY LIFE-COURSE

It is difficult to speak in general terms about the family life course due to the complexities in family form and sequence of family life events which have emerged in the past few decades. Furthermore, the often-revered traditional family of mother-homemaker, father-breadwinner does not adequately represent historical reality (Hayford, 1989). Still, one can note important approximate stages. For example, although marriage continues to be popular, it is now entered into later in life (McDaniel, 1988). Age at first marriage has risen from 21.2 years in 1965 to 23.7 years in 1985 (Grindstaff et.al., 1989). The proportion of those women not marrying at all was 5% in 1965 compared to 14% in 1984 (McDaniel, 1988). The probability of marriage ending in divorce has also increased. These changes have been accompanied by decreasing fertility and increasing longevity. The high 'baby boom' total fertility rate of 3.84 children per woman in 1961 has changed to below-replacement level of 1.67 in 1985 (McDaniel, 1988:3). What this does to the timing of family life- course events is to

substantially increase the possible diversity and complexity of family life patterns (Grindstaff, et.al., 1986; Jones, et.al., 1990; Anderson et.al.,1989).

Since the norm has become one of diversity and complexity, it is difficult to point to a typical age for major life events such as childbirth. Women today bear children within about a 5 year period compared to the 10 to 15 years more typical of earlier generations (Gee and Kimball, 1986). For some less-educated working-class women, childbirth may occur relatively early in life. Others, such as career women, may postpone or forego child-bearing altogether (Jones, et.al., 1990; Robinson, 1986). However, the median age for child-bearing has not changed much, remaining about 25 years of age. It is the length of time spent having children which has decreased (Gee, 1990). Also, marriage can no longer be assumed to precede childbirth. Some individuals choose to have children but forgo marriage (McDaniel, 1988). Further to the changes in child-bearing, the number of years spent in the 'empty nest' where the children have grown up and left home has increased from 6.8 to 30.2 years (Gee, 1990).

Despite this diversity the parenthood transition is probably still the first major life-course transition after marriage. There continues to be cultural pressure on women of child-bearing age to assume the maternal role (Rossi, 1979). Child-bearing remains an important step that grants adult women status comparable to that awarded to males for their labour force success (Eshleman, 1985; Parsons, 1955). And like their earlier counterparts, women remain more responsible than their male partners for child-rearing.

Even though women are encouraged to assume the maternal role, few receive support in performing it. Nor do they receive any realistic training for it. At one point, the extended family might have provided training for this role but, due to the decline of the extended family, this is less often the case. Contemporary society has failed to provide substitutes for extended kin (Rose, 1979). Thus, while most couples plan and look forward to having children, few are adequately prepared for this role. Most new mothers learn about parenting at the hospital, through personal reading, consultation with friends and parents, and through trial-and-error. New parents are abruptly thrown into a position where they must determine the needs of crying infants, provide an intense level of attention required by crawling and toddling infants (Clausen, 1986), and meet a 24 hour-a-day on-call responsibility requirement (Rossi, 1979). Yet childcare is not considered to be work. Rather, childcare is considered a private, natural, and essential role. When a new mother complains, she is often told, "well, you wanted the baby" (Rosenberg, in Maroney and Luxton, 1987).

Many other changes occur following the birth of the first child. Couples often experience decreased levels of happiness and marital satisfaction (Gee and Kimball, 1987), as well as confinement, exasperation and in many cases overwhelming fatigue (Cantor, 1990). New mothers quickly realize that the physical and psychological demands of parenting are incompatible with labour force activity (Clausen, 1986). A new baby needs time and nurturance. Childcare tasks are new and unfamiliar. There is an overwhelming amount of work to be done.

Some women manage to balance and integrate all of these responsibilities, while many have difficulty doing so. And, there is an added complication, new mothers are

today typically employees as well. They must balance and integrate their new mothering role with their labour force role and their other household roles.

2.1.3 OCCUPATIONAL LIFE-COURSE

The family life-course intersects with the occupational life-course at the point when women and men with career interests are trying to establish their careers. But, unlike men, married women who decide to bear children often are handicapped in their careers (Boyd, 1984). They are likely to be at their peak ladder-climbing years when they are also at their prime childbearing years. Hence, career women, especially those in traditional male occupations, are less likely than other women to be part of a family or, if married, to have children (Marshall, 1989). For individuals in occupations offering fewer career opportunities, the situation may be somewhat different (Clausen, 1986). The concern, here may be is with finding any suitable employment since basic family subsistence may be threatened without it.

Whatever their occupational status, many women face a dilemma. Childcare responsibility limits female labour force activity (Krahn and Lowe, 1988; Gee and Kimball, 1986). While some women interrupt their careers for childcare (Burch, 1988), this is no longer the norm. In the past when children reached school-age, women would return to the labour force. Today, women are less likely to opt out of the labour force due to childbirth. If they do, it is for substantially shorter periods of time (Robinson, 1986). In 1988, 58.3% of mothers of children less than three years of age and 65.1% of mothers of children 3-5 years old worked outside of the home (Statistics Canada, 1990). Thus, all women drop out of the workforce when they have

children. Instead, they tend to take a brief maternity leave and then return to work (Status of Women Canada, 1986).

Even though most working mothers take only brief maternity leaves, having a young child still prevents many from gaining more demanding employment opportunities or even from working full-time (Grindstaff, et.al., 1986). Because it is assumed that women have less continuous labour force experiences, they are often considered to be less attached to the labour force. Women may be passed over for promotion or other opportunities leading to career advancement simply because they are assumed to be most interested in their family. Many mothers experience conflict over time, energy, and loyalties, missing Boy Scout picnics, leaving work early to be with a sick child, turning down a business trip, and so on. In one mother's words, "It makes me feel crazy, I'm being pulled apart." Another commented that " I was working like a fiend all day, I kept thinking about Jessica and that I was missing her party. Finally, at 10 minutes to one, I went tearing out of the office. To hell with this, I thought. The tears were streaming down my cheeks the whole cab ride to the school. I can't take it, I thought. I can't take being a hard-nosed professional one minute and a nurturing mother the next. I feel truly schizophrenic" (Berg, 1986).

Career women are probably not unlike their male counterparts in terms of their job or career commitments, or even their desire to have a family. But they may be unlike their male counterparts in one important way. Women may consider the discussion of family concerns at work to be dangerous to the perception of their level of commitment and promotability. If they share information about family problems with others in the workplace, it may be assumed that they are somehow less serious about

their career. The conclusion often drawn is that women are less attached to the labour force. But, as the above quotes illustrate, the issue may not be attachment to the labour force but conflicting role requirements. A higher educated career woman's family and occupational life-course consequently often takes a different shape than that of many of her male counterparts. Some women withdraw from paid labour more or less permanently when children arrive. Many more withdraw only temporarily.

The pattern for working class women appears more idiosyncratic and fluid (Jones, et.al., 1990), since many non-career women change jobs and employers frequently. But few opt out of working during their lifetime. While this pattern may appear to reflect more individual choice, many working class women 'choose' the combination of housework and part-time work because they have difficulty obtaining full-time work at fair pay, quality affordable childcare, or spousal cooperation (Jones, et.al., 1990).

Although female career patterns are now more variable and fragmented, male careers have retained their unitary characteristics (Jones, et.al., 1990). Males appear free to pursue careers unaffected by child-rearing responsibilities. They may actually gain esteem when children are born. Although men's personal freedom may be somewhat constrained, rarely are their occupational roles affected. Some men become so engrossed in their labour force role that they are largely unavailable to their wives and families. It has been noted that married men are, on average, happier and healthier than their bachelor counterparts (McDaniel, 1988). Thus the family life-course does not have the same consequence for men, as it has for women.

Restating the point made earlier, there has been limited societal movement toward gender equality of opportunity, in employment, and in alternative life course variations. More educated men may today play a larger part in the household division of labour, and more affluent couples may have recourse to other options. Yet this is limited success at best, as some very serious vestiges of inequality remain fundamentally rooted in contemporary society (Boyd, 1984). This inequality and the resulting job-family conflicts are most obvious for women when children are born. In the family, traditional assumptions about appropriate role-behaviours mean that women are left with the greater share of household and childcare tasks. In the labour force, these same assumptions systematically limit women's career chances. Once a women confronts these systemic barriers, her resulting behaviours may act to reinforce assumptions regarding her lack of labour force attachment.

In short, careers are constructed for men, or the 'family free'. Such individuals are able to pursue their careers single-mindedly, often to the exclusion of all else. Professional women with children can enter this system, but are handicapped because they cannot conform as easily. As noted above, women in prime childbearing years must often do most of the work associated with domestic and childcare duties. This can result in an overloaded and stressful situation. Employed women with children must contend with stress from the combination of paid and unpaid work, and do so with even less assistance than they may have previously enjoyed (since their male partner is probably in his peak career-advancement years). At the same time many employed women wish to pursue careers. For many, this is incredibly difficult. They pay the price in terms of lost career-time while having the child, inadequate daycare options once the child is present, as well as diminished status at work where they are

not taken as seriously as men (McDaniel, 1988). This is all translates into reduced career prospects due to role overload.

2.2. EXPERIENCE OF THE TASK-DEMAND CRISIS

Although there are many difficult transitions during the family-life course (e.g. adolescence, marriage, aging, the 'empty nest', death of a loved one), the transition to parenthood may be the most important in terms of disruptions and restructuring of the household division of labour. The abrupt transition caused by the birth of a child can result in a major re-organization of statuses, roles, and relationships, and an overall increase in the number of female tasks associated with childcare (Pahl, 1984). Sleep-time, television-time, communication, sex and bathroom-time all are in short supply (Eshleman, 1985). New parents, especially women, find it very hard to cope. Unfortunately, the comfortable male myth regarding the 'maternal instinct' is just that, a myth. Many new mothers have problems and feel unhappy and inadequate as parents (Rossi 1979). Given full responsibility for childcare and domestic work, a lack of male assistance, and the inability to compete on male terms in a career, the 'crisis' or conflict created by new parenthood can be very difficult for women.

The term 'crisis' is most relevant when the female is overloaded with traditional culturally- defined tasks in addition to her labour force role. If the male partner does not see the female overload situation as a problem and the female partner does, a situation of conflict will occur. Up until the point of the conflict, domestic role-sharing

of whatever form (traditional or more egalitarian) may or may not have been an issue, or at least, a serious issue. After a first child is born, domestic role-sharing becomes an issue due to the increase in tasks needing to be done. Even if the marriage was largely egalitarian prior to a child's birth, the sudden increase in traditional female tasks provokes a change in the division of labour.

Discussions and disputes regarding the household division of labour are almost inevitable at this time. Conflict and temporary disorganization of household events are often necessary before a renegotiation of the division of labour can take place. This, of course, is not to suggest that re-negotiation always occurs. In fact, many women continue to carry most of the additional household and childrearing burden themselves. They may not define their situation as negatively if, for example, they 'buy into' the predominantly traditional/cultural female role. Nevertheless, the arrival of a child provokes a situation of crisis in most cases and can force even the most egalitarian couples back to more traditional behaviours. With the arrival of a first child, a huge array of new household tasks demand to be done. Most of these are 'traditional' female tasks. The assumption that the woman will do them provokes a 'task-demand crisis' for her.

Why do so many women work a 'double day' even though it is most rational to demand a change? Some women have suggested that the renegotiation process is more trouble than it is worth . Many who try to renegotiate responsibility for tasks, fail in the attempt. For the majority, a request for task re-distribution is more likely to result in a tension-generating, manipulative power struggle (Luxton, 1986) than in a re-distribution. The following example describes a couple who claimed to successfully

renegotiate household tasks. In the woman's words, "we both verbally support non-traditional roles in the home, I still carry the majority of responsibility. Even though I am stressed and feel somewhat resentful that this is unfair, I accept the situation not wanting to disappoint or inconvenience my husband because of my work" (Berg, 1986).

To push this point further, Luxton (1986) notes that the renegotiation of the household division of labour when women work outside the home may take a variety of forms. Some women use gentle appeals for fairness whereas others make more militant demands for greater or more equal male participation. But, in the majority of cases, re-negotiation does not occur. Instead the result is outright resistance or more subtle forms of resistance. For example, "he was unable to do the dishes as he was left-handed and the sink was designed for right-handed people" (Luxton, 1986).

Most often, women respond to the increased task demands by expanding their own worktime. In fact, this is such a taken-for-granted occurrence that few people question it, demonstrating the strength of underlying patriarchal assumptions that it is natural for women to work the 'double day.' Researchers are often equally influenced by patriarchal assumptions. There is a surprising number of studies that ask whether married women with young children should work, whether they feel guilty about working, or if their marriages are compromised by their work. This androcentric approach takes for granted that, unlike their wives, many husbands do not and should not experience divided loyalties (McDaniel, 1988). In order to understand the job-family conflicts arising after the arrival of a first child, we must examine gender-role attitudes (reflecting a patriarchal ideology). However, we must also acknowledge the

dialectical nature of attitudes influencing behaviour, and vice versa, as attitudes alone cannot be shown to produce specific work and family behaviours (Lowe and Krahn, 1985).

2.3 INTERNAL/IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS

Self-images or identities of women and men in our society are developed and maintained by both liberal and patriarchal value-systems. The liberal ideology acknowledges some systemic social inequalities and the need to advocate at least some social change (Marchak, 1981). Evidence of this value-system can be found in the employment and pay-equity programs implemented across the country. Yet, regardless of a woman's improved access to higher education and higher status occupations, she is still faced with a gender-role ideology which inhibits progressive change.

Walby (1986) explains gender inequality by proposing that patriarchy is an analytically separate system of values and behaviours that interacts with capitalism to produce an inter-related social structure through which men exploit women. Beliefs and attitudes regarding unequal roles are socially constructed and reinforced within the family. These ideas are transmitted between individuals and across generations. Children are socialized into appropriate male or female identity patterns before they can walk and talk (Duvall and Miller, 1985). Aspirations for future family and career are reinforced within the education system (Ellis and Sayer, 1986). Hence, once in families of their own, many men and women take on the traditionally defined gender identities and teach the same roles to their children through their words and actions.

Thus, women still confront a pervasive set of traditional assumptions about 'appropriate' female gender roles. These assumptions are socialized into individuals, and are built into social structures as illustrated by the gender-segregated labour market and the substantial female-male wage gap (Krahn and Lowe, 1988). And if women get beyond these barriers, they may still encounter a further invisible barrier (the glass ceiling) preventing them from achieving equal opportunities at the higher level jobs (Morrison, 1987). The difficulty in breaking through these barriers can be traced back to the strength of patriarchal values regarding gender roles. This pervasive value-system operates at both the individual and structural level, making it difficult for women to be taken seriously and, in some cases, to remain committed to their career goals (Walby, 1986).

Traditional patriarchal assumptions were a crucial part of the family-wage and gender-role ideology of decades gone by. These particular beliefs have not kept up with the times, and conflict with contemporary liberal values. Liberal ideology allows us to expect differences between individuals based on merit and achievement. It does not, however, recognize that success is also a function of social characteristics. Hence, liberal beliefs can obstruct our vision, allowing us to attribute systemic defects to individuals (Marchak, 1981). As individuals, our internalized self-images and identities contain this contradiction between a meritocracy and a system based on social category membership. Our attitudes regarding appropriate gender roles reflect the contradiction which in turn is reinforced by our behaviours. These traditional behaviours then act to reinforce or justify discrimination at the structural level.

2.3.1 FEMALE GENDER ROLE IDENTITIES

Underlying the belief that women with small children should not work outside the home is the idea that once she becomes a mother, a woman is expected to devote her life to, and constantly sacrifice on her child's behalf (Duffy, 1988). This belief has such power that the eventual development and well-being of the child is considered to be a result of 'good or bad mothering' (Suleiman, 1988). Further, women are expected to interrupt or terminate their workforce careers for childcare because it is their maternal responsibility. In fact, once a mother, a woman's role or identity with childcare is inextricably intertwined with what becomes interpreted as being a 'good' woman (Marshall, 1989; Matthews, 1984).

A woman's identification with the maternal/domestic role is often left unquestioned. She must learn to love her baby, and to have confidence in herself as a wife/mother/person. Childcare is considered a natural and essential role performed by mothers in private in the home (Rosenberg, 1987). Mothers must also shop, cook, do dishes, clean, wash and iron. Employment for women is assumed to involve personal sacrifice, role conflict and task overload. It is also assumed that women must work in the home, employed or not (Gee and Kimball, 1987). Even within those couples expressing egalitarian ideals, it is most often the women who stay home from work with a sick child (Northcott, 1983).

This traditional arrangement is changing for some families (Stebbins, 1988; Rosin, 1988), but remains for the majority (Duvall and Miller, 1985). A recent study of Canadian school children shows that although many children are now aware of a

range of career options for men and women, they do not see themselves opting for non-traditional occupational roles. In addition, many of those young women who expected to have a career also expected to balance their career with family responsibility (Ellis and Sayer, 1986). The lag between traditional gender- role identities and contemporary economic realities reflects patriarchal assumptions. This can be described as a 1950's division of labour within a 1980's reality of paid work as economic necessity (McDaniel, 1988).

2.3.2 MALE GENDER ROLE IDENTITIES

The fact that women face a difficult reconciliation of their gender identity with their paid and unpaid work responsibilities also indicates a lack of change in the male gender identity. Few men have expanded their participation in domestic and childcare work (Coverman, 1985), even though the majority of contemporary families require two incomes to maintain their standard of living. The normative expectations of men do not yet include equally shared or egalitarian domestic responsibility (Bielby and Bielby, 1989). Instead, many men continue to see themselves primarily as household heads and as 'breadwinners', even within dual-earner families.

To be fair, however, we must admit that behavioural changes have occurred among younger, more highly-educated males (Boyd, 1984). But, it can also be argued that young, well-educated males may be less likely to have children and therefore have not yet reached the point of task-demand conflict described earlier. For such young men, the relationship between age, education and egalitarian ideas may be somewhat deceptive. Similarly, even though more men may be participating in household work

than in earlier generations, this trend is not as widespread as many think. The unequal allocation of household and childcare responsibility remains intact (Smith and Reid, 1986; Hartmann, 1981; Coverman, 1985; Boyd, 1984). Not only do few men participate, but those who do exaggerate the amount. Lopata et.al. (1980) found that a sample of men who thought they did 25% of the housework were, according to their wives, doing only half that much. When men participate in childcare, they often state that they are 'babysitting' their own children (Luxton, 1983). It appears that often the most involved father is, at best, a part-time contributor (Duffy et.al., 1989).

This conclusion is based on the assumption that the female perception of the amount that men contribute is the accurate perception. This may or may not be correct. However, this research design problem can be reconciled by keeping track of time spent on various household tasks and through third-party observation. Such studies show that men do not participate in the same tasks or with the same frequency as do women (Hochschild, 1989; Luxton, 1980).

Lack of participation in housework and childcare are sometimes linked to a threat to male self- esteem (Gunderson, 1976; Harris and Morris, 1986). Such apprehensions are further evidence of how gender role identities can influence behaviour. If even some men feel their male identity threatened by participating in traditionally female tasks, the patriarchal value system must indeed be powerful.

2.4 EXTERNAL / SITUATIONAL OR STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS

While much can be said about the pervasive effects of socialization (and, hence, the patriarchal value system) in the development of gender role identities , this is far from the whole story. Just as gender-role attitudes cannot be ignored, neither can we ignore the structural constraints that affect individuals. Structural constraints are built upon and reinforced by the same restrictive gender-role assumptions. It is therefore important to consider the structural factors affecting the household division of labour at that stage in the family life-course when small children are most likely to be present (Bielby and Bielby, 1984). While not all women are equally affected by these factors, they do exist and can help to precipitate the task-demand crisis for many young mothers. I will focus the discussion on two of the most significant external constraints, i.e., the gender-segregated labour market and the lack of institutionalized childcare support for working mothers.

2.4.1 THE GENDER-SEGREGATED LABOUR MARKET

Women are often excluded from jobs due to assumptions about their gender-based family responsibility. To some extent, an implicit expectation remains that women will take on a secondary employment role due to these family responsibilities (Sangster, 1986). It is also often assumed that women do not require or even want higher-status jobs (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1984), and that they work only to supplement the family income. With the existing wage-gap, this assumption may appear reasonable in dollar terms. Further, family responsibilities are assumed to

negatively and regularly affect a woman's time and her commitment to her job (Nakamura, 1989).

This narrow view is based on an assumption of 'scarcity of resources', that an individual can be committed to either the home or labour force but not to both (Bielby and Bielby, 1984; Lopata and Norr, 1980). It is assumed that working mothers are unable to commit to a multiplicity of roles. Since their primary role is mothering and working in the home, their labour force roles are assumed to be of secondary status (Bielby and Bielby, 1989).

Of course, this pattern does not describe all women. Although there is no dispute that domestic work and childcare adds labour hours, these extra hours do not necessarily affect paid work. In order to prevent their domestic work from interfering with their paid job, women compensate by working harder, hiring domestic services, or by becoming the 'superwoman'. It has been noted by Bielby and Bielby (1989) that most women actually put in more effort then do men when children enter their lives. Their effort in their paid job merely drops to the level of a typical male without domestic and childcare responsibility. This option, although attempted by many, is extremely difficult. Failures serve to bolster the notion of less labour force commitment and split allegiances of working mothers.

What remains, however, is women's 'traditional' primary responsibility for domestic and childcare work that in turn affects opportunities for entrance to and advancement in the labour market. The assumptions of a maternal/domestic responsibility role used by 1950's employers to justify the placement of women in low-

prospect work (Purcell, 1988) frequently continues to direct job placements of women today. The segregation of opportunity finds its full effect in the female-male wage gap (Dex, 1988). Women who work full-time continue to be paid about two-thirds of what men are paid (Krahn and Lowe, 1988). Gender-based occupational segregation is also perpetuated because women are still more likely to choose traditional female occupations like nursing, which pay less. This pattern is a function of earlier educational choices.

Thus the structure of the labour market reflects assumptions regarding gender-role inequality and produces occupational segmentation and serious career blocks for women. The difficult demands of housework and childcare, and the lack of male assistance, prevents many working mothers from taking opportunities that are available. Hence, many women are unable to compete for better jobs, work longer hours, work at inconvenient locations, or take on those all-consuming job challenges (Voydanoff, 1987; Hochschild, 1989). Unfortunately, what women are unable to do is often that which is defined as necessary for career success in the male-biased labour market. Women's inability to conform to the traditional male career path due to conflicting home and work demands reinforces the stereotypical belief in the primacy of the maternal role.

2.4.2 LACK OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS: CHILDCARE

Probably one of the most obvious constraints reinforcing gender role inequality is the difficulty in gaining access to good quality and affordable childcare. The

shortage of quality childcare directly reflects the assumed maternal responsibility for childcare as well as the lack of recognition of what this responsibility entails. Many women opt for more traditional/maternal roles, while others are forced into them, because quality childcare is scarce and expensive (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1987; Cook (ed.), 1976).

The following facts bring this problem into sharper focus. In 1981, 121,000 Canadian mothers had to leave or refuse a job due to the problems associated with obtaining quality childcare. In 1984, there were 171,654 licensed spaces in Canada to serve the needs of 1,950,000 young children. In 1988, there were 263,626 licensed spaces. The rapid growth in the number of young mothers entering the labour force is fueling this increase. The good news is that the greatest increases in child-care spaces have occurred for those with pre-school children. The bad news is that even with the increase, only 23% or 1 in 4 of all eligible children can gain access to the service. In addition, childcare services rarely accommodate the needs of shift workers, or those who work seasonally. Nor do they provide specialized care for sick or school-aged children (Status of Women, 1986). The overall lack of childcare service cannot help but have a significant effect on labour force participation of women.

Due to the lack of institutionalized childcare support, many families must use informal care by relatives, friends or neighbours (Status of Women, 1986). Of those who opt for informal care, many have unstable arrangements that fail when either the caretaker or the child is ill. Others, particularly those with school-aged children, go without services entirely. 'Latch-key' children must look after themselves while their parents are at work. This reflects both the lack of available service as well as the

mismatch between hours of school and work with the available source of childcare. It foreshadows the problems experienced by working mothers when their children are ill. Mothers' attendance and participation in their paid work often suffers as a consequence.

In many cases, withdrawal from the labour force, permanently or temporarily, may be more the result of the lack of adequate childcare, and the stress of juggling and integrating conflicting demands of job/family/household, than of a mother's choice due to her gender/maternal role perceptions. What the lack of childcare service very clearly demonstrates is the society-wide ideological expectations regarding a woman's responsibility and identity with childcare. In this way, gender-role identity is linked to these external/situational constraints.

Access to good quality and affordable childcare will act as a powerful moderator to the task-demand crisis experienced by young couples after the arrival of a first child. Those families that have access to such a service find it easier to balance job and family obligations. Women may be able to carry on with their labour force work with minimal absences and worry once their childcare concerns have been solved. Those most likely to gain access to quality and affordable childcare are those with better jobs and higher incomes. This all translates into greater life-chances for those in higher-income families. Thus, all of these variables act to moderate the crisis situation by making it less stressful and difficult. Still, career women (with higher incomes) experience very real problems, especially with respect to lack of time and energy. Even so, life-chance variables represent differential access to financial resources which can reduce the task-demand crisis. Thus we can better understand why some families are compelled to

conform to traditional division of labour patterns, whereas others are not (Gerson, 1985).

Access to financial / material resources (or class differences) is one of the main situational variables found to predict the labour force behaviour of women with pre-schoolers (Lowe and Krahn, 1985; Gorden and Kammeyer, 1980). Middle-class, better-educated women, who have access to higher incomes, are more likely to work to purchase desired consumer goods (Gunderson, 1976). Education may also have an independent effect on labour force participation. The desire to succeed becomes an expected goal with increased amounts of education. Working-class women are more likely to work due to financial necessity. These women are not as able to choose how they will spend their time. They often work at whatever jobs that are available. Without their additional income, their families would be at serious financial risk (Lowe and Krahn, 1985). However, with the relative decline in earnings in Canada over the past decade, this is also now true of most middle- class families.

In short, the re-negotiation of the household division of labour when a child arrives can be affected by the socio-economic status of the couple. The ability to buy services is higher among those with better-paid occupations (although the child-care availability problem remains). Therefore, the task demand crisis may not be as severe for such couples.

2.5 THE TASK-DEMAND CRISIS: AN INTEGRATED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

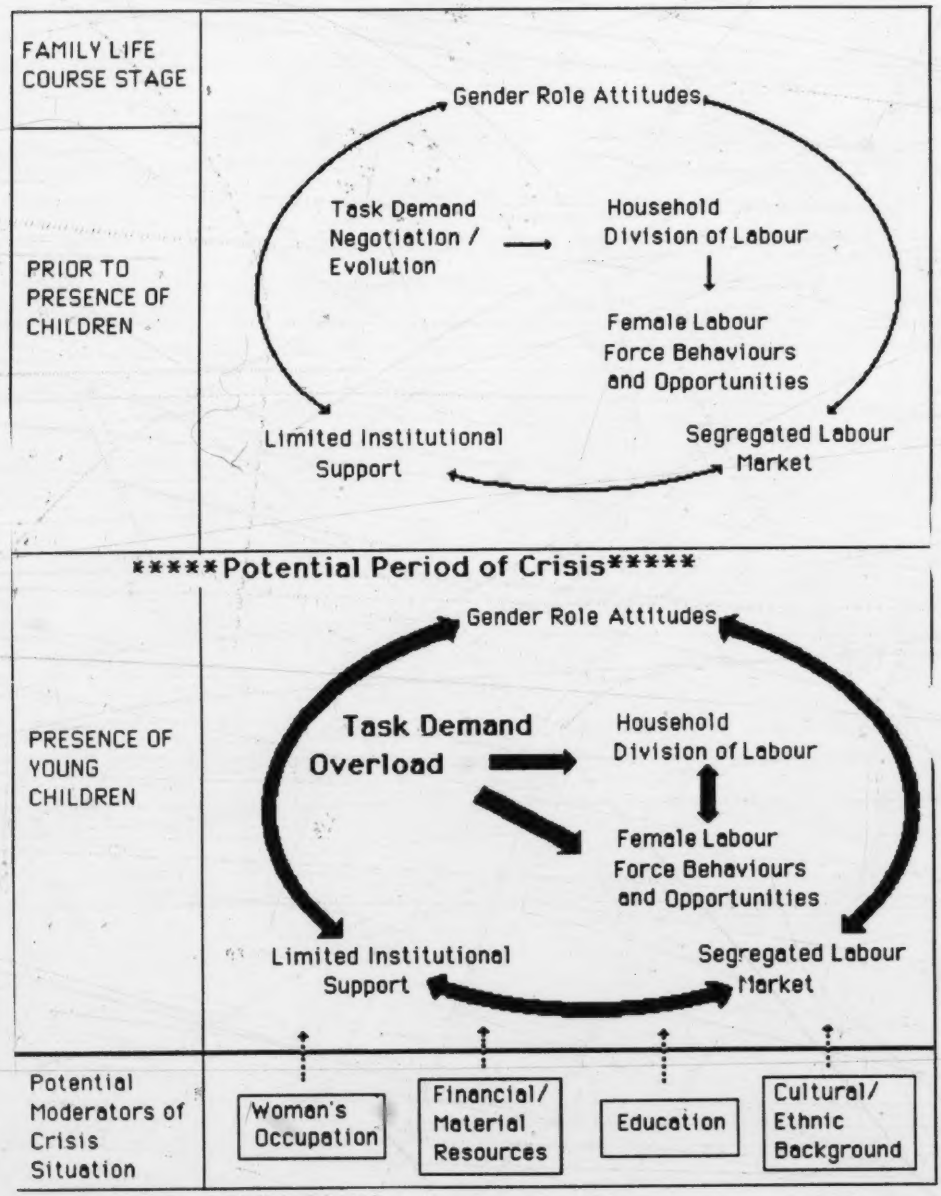
In sum, gender-role attitudes, family context, labour market structures and availability of childcare constraints alone are insufficient to explain any one specific family's division of labour (Gerson, 1985). Childhood socio-cultural learning and gender role socialization provide the background from which individuals confront their household divisions of labour. Certainly each internalized constraint plays a role in forming an individual's experience of his or her gender-role. But social, economic, and political structures also influence the development of an individual's gender- role identity.

Therefore, we cannot insist that the gender-segregated labour market and the shortage of quality childcare alone support and maintain an inequitable household division of labour (where the female does far more than an equal share). Similarly, we cannot place primary causal emphasis on gender-role attitudes (the individual expression of a patriarchal society). And we must acknowledge that traditional divisions of labour within the household reinforce attitudinal and structural patterns. But we can say that women are largely confined to a situation of subordination in both the public sphere of employment and the somewhat more private sphere of the home. In this thesis, the focus in on the cumulative effect of both sets of constraints (internal and external) on the household division of labour at the 'crisis' point when children become part of the family.

This leaves us with a complex interplay of attitudinal and structural factors that perpetuate gender-based inequality in the family. Both internalized and externally perpetuated ideas about gender roles operate to pressure the bearers of children to take almost full responsibility for rearing them as well as for most of the other household labour. Figure 1 links all of these factors in a broad conceptual framework.

Figure 1

The Task-Demand Crisis: An Integrated Conceptual Framework



2.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Although a large number of general research questions are suggested by this literature review and theoretical framework, the empirical data used in this project cannot begin to test all of the relationships implied. These data can, however be used to address some of the most important questions. The following questions focus on some of the key relationships that link gender role attitudes, the task-demand crisis precipitated by the arrival of children into a family, and the household division of labour.

1. What are the current attitudes of Albertans regarding gender roles and how do they divide up household tasks?

2. To what extent do beliefs about appropriate gender-roles affect the performance of household tasks and the perception of women's career opportunities?

3. How do couples with children differ from those without in the way they divide their household labour ?

4. To what extent does the arrival of children in a family precipitate a task-demand crisis regarding the household division of labour?

5. How does the presence of young children affect parents' perceptions of career opportunities?

6. To what extent does the effect of young children on the household division of labour vary by social status as defined by household income?

The following data analyses are exploratory. Once these research questions have been addressed and the usefulness of the conceptual framework has been demonstrated, more specific research on one or more of the specified relationships can proceed. The main objective of this research is to link feminist, family and sociology of work literatures by placing the child at the centre of the discussion regarding the allocation of household tasks, and the impediments to career development for women. In this way the life-course of couples is emphasized when it has previously been largely ignored. The magnitude of gender inequality in the home, the workplace and larger social structure appears to be most obvious in the family life-course when the first child arrives. It is the relevance of this specific event and its effect that highlights the second objective of this research. The findings can be of considerable value in seeking solutions to the task-demand crisis found by ever-larger numbers of young women attempting to balance work and family responsibilities.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

3.1 SAMPLING

The first set of analyses in this study use data (n=1190) from the 1989 Alberta Survey (AS). This survey is the third in the annual province-wide series conducted by the Population Research Laboratory (PRL) of the Department of Sociology, University of Alberta. The sample consists of persons 18 years of age and older who, at the time of the survey, were living in Alberta. Respondents living outside of the city of Edmonton were contacted by random-digit-dialing and participated in a half-hour telephone interview. Two samples were drawn in this manner. One sample represented the city of Calgary and the second the remainder of the province of Alberta. The 1989 Edmonton Area Study (EAS), the 13th in an annual series within this city, is also part of the 1989 Alberta Survey. However, the EAS uses face-to-face interviews instead of telephone interviews. This allows the interviewers to ask more questions.

To answer some of the additional research questions noted above, data from the smaller Edmonton Area study are used (n=443). Respondents in this study were selected in a two-stage process. The initial sampling frame was constructed from the computerized list of addresses compiled during the Edmonton Civic Census in spring, 1987. A simple random sample of 620 addresses was selected excluding nursing homes, military and temporary residences. Within each household, one eligible individual was selected to be the respondent. Face-to-face interviews lasted an average

of about one hour. In order to obtain equal numbers of males and females, a quota sampling system was used.

Because the Alberta Survey (and the Edmonton Area Study within it) is a random sample survey of individuals, the men and women in the sample are from different households and are not related. While we cannot compare the perceptions and experiences of women and men in the same households, we can compare random samples of men and women and infer that differences between them would be evident within households, if paired interviews of marital partners had been possible.

The full sample of 443 Edmonton respondents consisted of 48.3% males and 51.7% females. Of these individuals, a sub-sample of 250 or 71.1% were living within 'couple' relationships that included those who were married or living in common-law unions (Kinzel, 1989). Of the subset of 250 respondents living in couples, 134 (53.6%) were men and 116 (46.4%) were women. Of these couples, 126 (50.4%) were childless, 68 (27.2%) had pre-school children and 56 (22.4%) had school-aged children. For the total province, the full random sample of 1190 respondents consisted of 588 (49%) males and of 602 (51%) females. The marital status distribution was similar to the Edmonton sample, with 810 or 68% married or living within 'couple' relationships.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

For collection of the AS data, two modes of interviewing were used. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in the city of Edmonton. The EAS interview data were

collected by 31 trained interviewers from the PRL interviewing pool during February and March of 1989. A letter was sent to each selected address in the week prior to field-work commencement. The letter briefly described the nature of the study and advised the residents of each household that they should expect a visit from a PRL interviewer in the near future. Telephone interviewing with random-digit-dialing (RDD) was used to collect data from Calgary and other areas in the province of Alberta. This combination of survey data collection methodologies ensured that a complete sample representative of the population of Alberta was generated.

Data collection in Edmonton took six weeks, with 66% of the interviewing completed during the first two weeks. The average interviewer completed 14 interviews. If the interviewers were unsuccessful in establishing contact on the first attempt, four call-back attempts were made before declaring an address as 'no contact'. Forty of the selected addresses were found to be ineligible, vacant or for demolished buildings. These deletions were considered as corrections rather than non-responses in the sample. Telephone data collection took four weeks, with interviewers completing an average of 62 interviews. Up to ten telephone call-backs were made before a number was declared a 'no contact'. The final response rates for the three sub-samples were 76% in Edmonton, 75% in Calgary, and 80% in the rest of Alberta.

A random sample of completed interviews (15%) was verified through a series of checks which included re-contacting respondents by telephone. This procedure allowed any significant discrepancies or irregularities to be questioned and corrected (Kinzel, 1989).

3.3 MEASUREMENT

3.3.1 CHALLENGES TO TRADITIONAL GENDER-ROLES

A set of three questions was used to determine if attitudes toward gender roles are more egalitarian or traditional. These questions are used as a measure of internal constraints that may explain variations in individual behaviour. They are scored on a Likert scale with responses of strongly disagree to strongly agree, or strongly disapprove to strongly approve. The first two questions were asked of all Albertans, the third only of the Edmonton respondents.

Any father should be allowed paternity leave from his job, if he chooses to stay home with a new baby. **(Var.063)**

Do you approve/disapprove of a married woman working, if she has children under three years of age. **(Var. 073)**

Marriages would be more satisfying if men participated more actively in the household and family roles. **(Var. 066)**

Although these questions may elicit a socially desirable response, they are still reasonably good indicators of traditional/egalitarian gender role attitudes. Unfortunately, companion questions asking, for example, whether women should be allowed maternity leave were not included in the study. Respondents were not asked whether marriages would be more satisfying if women were more active, presumably because they are expected to be active already. Similarly, a question about working fathers of small children was not asked. By not asking such companion questions, we implicitly accept a patriarchal assumption that women's involvement with childcare is

expected whereas men's involvement is not. However, when considering the dynamics of an interview, asking the companion question might only serve to confuse respondents and hence jeopardize the quality of the response.

3.3.2 EFFECTS FAMILY ON CAREER

The second set of questions asked people married or living common-law who worked full or part-time about career-related problems. These questions allow us to determine how males and females rank the importance of their job relative to their partner's job. With this information we can look at responses among individuals with and without children to see if the presence of children has as much impact as predicted. These questions were asked only of the Edmonton sample.

For yourself, which do you think is most important, your job or your family? (**Var 187**)

For your (spouse/partner), which do you think is most important, (his/her) job or his/her family? (**Var 188**)

How much would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

My job is a severe strain on our family life. (**Var 195**)

My (spouse/partner)'s job is a severe strain on our family life. (**Var 196**)

If you had a chance to get ahead in your job or career but had to move to a new community, would both of you move? (**Var 189**)

If your (spouse/partner) had a chance to get ahead in (his/her) job or career but had to move to a new community, would both of you move? (**Var 190**)

Sometimes couples find that with both partners working things get too difficult. Have you ever seriously considered quitting work completely because of such difficulties? **(Var 191)**

Has your spouse ever considered quitting work because of such difficulties? **(Var 192)**

Even though these questions can provide valuable insights, the word 'difficulties' in the last two questions make the meaning of the answer somewhat ambiguous. The respondent must imagine what the question really means. For example, does 'difficulty' mean a minor schedule problem or does it mean more serious problems such as those leading to divorce? Still, the question asks about a concrete behaviour, so an indication of some level of difficulty due to balancing work-roles may be apparent. In addition, unlike the previous set of questions, this set of questions is not problematic as companion questions were asked of respondents regarding their spouse/partner's activities.

3.3.3. PRESENCE OF CHILDREN

The key independent variable in this study is the presence of a pre-school child, since it is pre-school children more than older children that will first precipitate the task-demand crisis discussed in the previous chapter. While it is true that school-aged children must have also produced the same state of conflict and stress at an earlier time, the memory may not be as fresh. Therefore, those couples with pre-school children, regardless of whether the pre-schooler is a first- born or not, are those predicted to be at the most difficult stage in their family life-course with respect to the household division of labour.

This point clearly highlights the value of longitudinal research over cross-sectional research. A longitudinal study could describe much more powerfully the difficulties experienced as a result of a new baby, and the changes in the household division of labour that followed. However, with cross-sectional data we can only describe the behaviours and attitudes of couples at different stages in the family life-course. From differences between these group we must then infer what changes over-time would involve.

All respondents in this cross-sectional study were asked whether they had children, and whether they were pre-school or school-aged. A three-category 'child' variable was created. The first category contains childless respondents and provides a reference point to be used for comparing to the other two categories. The second group has pre-school children (aged 1-5) while the third group has school-aged children (6-15). If a respondent indicated that s/he had both pre-school and school-aged children, this respondent was coded as having pre-school children since the pre-school child is considered to be of greatest theoretical importance.

Those couples who do not have children would be expected to have a more egalitarian household division of labour than those who do have children. Those with children will have experienced, to varying degrees, the task-demand crisis. In such couples, women will be actively engaged in the 'double day'. The 'crisis' should be most severe for couples with pre-school children. Parents of older school-aged children may have more established behavioural patterns. More importantly, with children in school, the 'crisis' would be expected to be less severe.

3.3.4 FEMALE LABOUR FORCE STATUS

A variable indicating the female partner's labour force status was constructed from responses to questions about the respondent's and the spouse's labour force status. For example, if the respondent was male, this information was taken from the question about his spouse/partner. Thus, the 250 couples were classified according to whether the woman was not in the labour force (45%), was working full-time (38%), or part-time (16%). Those not in the labour force included individuals who were unemployed (6%), retired (9%), students (6%), disabled (2%) and homemakers (22%).

3.3.5 HOUSEHOLD DIVISION OF LABOUR

The main dependent variable of interest in this study is participation in domestic work within the home. The household division of labour is represented by an index constructed from five household task questions used in the questionnaire. These questions were asked of all Albertans.

Who normally does the cooking in your household? **(Var. 138)**

Who usually does the after-meal cleanup? **(Var 139)**

Who normally does the grocery shopping? **(Var 140)**

Who normally does the cleaning in your household? **(Var 141)**

Who normally looks after the laundry? **(Var 142)**

The vocabulary changes here may present a small problem since the phrase 'looks after' is used in only one of the questions. There are also some important companion questions omitted. For example, respondents were not asked about who handles household finances, or does yard work, household and car maintenance and repair. These are important because they represent traditional male tasks. It would have been interesting to see how far women have moved into participation in these tasks.

For each of the tasks, a range of possible responses were available to sample members.

a) respondent

b) spouse/partner

c) shared equally with spouse

d) shared equally with everyone

e) children

f) children and respondent

g) children and spouse

h) someone else - specify

The response categories a) respondent, b) spouse, c) shared equally with spouse and d) shared equally with everyone were used. Since I was only interested in knowing what patterns existed among male and female partners, the remaining categories were recoded as missing information. Since the vast majority of respondents

chose one of the first four categories, few cases were omitted from the analysis because of this decision.

Responses to these questions were coded into traditional or egalitarian behavioural patterns to construct the dependent variable index. For example, if a woman was reported as doing most or all of the domestic work, this was coded as a traditional pattern. If there was sharing of the tasks, or if the male was performing the tasks, this was taken as indicative of an egalitarian pattern. This implies that if males do all of the household work, the household division of labour is interpreted as egalitarian. However, there were very few reversals of traditional gender-roles in this sample.

Each of the variables used in the index was renamed to identify the task involved. Values representing traditional and egalitarian patterns were then added together to form the household division of labour index. A higher value on this index means Cronbach's Alpha for the index was .56, representing a moderate level of inter-item reliability.

The division of labour variables outline here are conventional female tasks (Pahl, 1984). Conventional male tasks such as house repair, maintenance, and car care are excluded, since questions on these traditional male tasks were not included in the survey. However, this is not as problematic as it may at first appear. We know that women do most of the household work in most families. Even when men do participate, women take a larger share of the total household work (Pahl, 1984; Luxton, 1980). A woman looks after herself, her husband, other adults and dependents. She

bears and rears children, does housework, and transfers wages into goods and services for the household. Men 'help out', at best. The quality and quantity of male participation in female conventional tasks is known to be generally over-reported by men.

The kind of work men do has more clearly-defined boundaries. Male tasks are not reported on a daily basis. A car may be washed once a week while dishes may need to be washed three or four times a day. Lawn-mowers may need annual repair, while clothes need repair on a regular basis. Male tasks also tend to involve less on-going management or pre-task planning. Thus, the omission of traditional male tasks in the household division of labour index may not be very serious.

3.3.6. DIVISION OF LABOUR - CHILDCARE

The division of childcare labour was considered using answers to two questions about childcare tasks. Since these tasks would typically be more important for younger children, the questions were only asked if the respondent had children under age twelve. Consequently, the analyses using these questions will be based on a small sample.

In your household, do you or your (spouse/partner) normally stay home if a child is sick? **(Var 132)**

Who would usually be responsible for finding a babysitter or arranging childcare, if this is necessary? **(Var 135)**

The response categories for these two questions were coded exactly like those in the household division of labour. However, an index was not created because the two variable were not that highly correlated.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR

Canadians confront a powerful set of ideological assumptions regarding their appropriate gender-role behaviours, including how household tasks should be divided. There is much research demonstrating that task allocation remains highly traditional. Yet this pattern is not always acknowledged or even noticed by couples. In fact, some would argue that their division of labour is fair and equitable, in the face of evidence to the contrary. I would suggest that some couples may simply have not experienced the task demand crisis described earlier, especially if they have not yet experienced the the reality of parenting. Once children are present, hidden assumptions regarding appropriate gender-role attitudes begin to reshape the division of labour. It is at this 'crisis' point that couples appear to most fully encounter the submerged expectations regarding their roles.

Survey data from a sample of Alberta couples are used in this thesis to explore these issues. First, we profile the gender-role attitudes of the full sample of Albertans, using three attitude statements. Second, we describe the reported household division of labour of the couples in this provincial sample. For the division of childcare labour, only those with children under 12 were asked the questions. Finally, we look at individual perceptions of career opportunities. These questions

were only asked of the Edmonton sample. Since we are interested in the effect of gender role attitudes (which are taken to reflect patriarchal ideology) on behaviour and career decisions when children are most likely to be present, the sample used in the third section of the analysis is limited to those up to 44 years of age (and living in Edmonton). This group will hereafter be known as the 'target population'.

4.1.1 PROFILE OF GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES IN ALBERTA, 1989

As noted above, the first analysis examines the gender-role attitudes of Albertans using three basic attitude questions. Responses to these attitude questions are expected to vary by age and sex. These predictions are not to be seen as formal hypotheses. Rather, this first section merely sets the context for the rest of the analysis, showing the extent to which Albertans still adhere to traditional beliefs regarding appropriate gender roles. Men are expected to have more traditional role expectations then are women. Older individuals will more likely hold traditional attitudes. Assumptions regarding appropriate role behaviours were seldom questioned in the past. It is therefore more likely that traditional beliefs are intact with the older group. Where older individuals may hold more traditional expectations and ideas, younger individuals are less likely to do so.

The extent of traditional gender-role beliefs among Albertans was measured by considering responses to the following questions. The first two statements were presented to the total Alberta sample, while the third statement was only asked of the Edmonton portion of the sample.

1. Generally, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of a married woman working, if she has children under three years of age?

2. How much do you agree or disagree that any father should be allowed paternity leave from his job, if he chooses to stay home with a new baby?

3. How much do you agree or disagree that marriages would be more satisfying if men participated more actively in household and family roles?

Agreement with (or approval of) these statements were considered to be evidence of more egalitarian attitudes. This is, of course, a limited measure of the extent of traditional gender-role attitudes (and, hence, the strength of patriarchal ideology). A broader range of questions would have been preferred, as well as different question wording in several specific statements, as noted earlier. Table 1 displays responses to these questions by age and sex. The seven-point response scales are collapsed into three categories (Disagree/disapprove; neutral; agree/approve).

Table 1

Gender Role Attitudes by Age and Gender of Respondent, Alberta, 1989.

OPINION			Males			Females	
		Tot.	<45	>45	Tot.	<45	>45
		%(n)	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)
Working	Dissapprove	48(315)	49(201)	66(114)	49(296)	41(159)	65(137)
women with	Neut.	27(176)	20(83)	14(24)	21(125)	24(93)	15 (32)
children less	Approve	25(160)	31(126)	20(34)	30(181)	35(138)	20 (43)
than three yrs.		100(651)	100(411)	100(171)	100(602)	100(389)	100(212)
Fathers should	Disagree	31(181)	26(107)	43(74)	21(125)	13(50)	36 (75)
be allowed	Neut.	18(106)	26(107)	43(74)	21(125)	13(50)	36 (75)
paternity	Agree	51(298)	55(227)	40(71)	63(372)	71(276)	46 (96)
leave		100(585)	100(411)	100(174)	100(595)	100(388)	100(206)
Marriages are	Disagree	5 (7)	3 (3)	10 (4)	3 (5)	2 (2)	5 (3)
better if men	Neut.	11 (16)	11 (12)	10 (4)	7 (11)	7 (8)	7 (3)
are more	Agree	85(123)	86 (90)	80 (33)	90(141)	91 (96)	88 (45)
active		100(146)	100 (105)	100 (41)	100(157)	100(105)	100(51)

Source: Questions 1 and 2 - 1989 Alberta Survey, Question 3 - 1989 Edmonton Area Study

Probably the most striking finding in Table 1 is the lack of support for working mothers who have children less than three years of age. Almost half of the respondents (48% of males and 49% of females) report disapproval or think negatively of working mothers of small children. Only 25% of Alberta men and 30% of women in the province approve. In short, the typical gender-role attitude clearly dictates that mothers should stay home with young children.

These results are similar to what Boyd (1984) found in her study of Gallup Polls, and what other more recent polls have shown. Canadians think that women with pre-school children should not work outside of the home (Alberta Women's Secretariat, 1989; Bozinoff and MacIntosh, 1989). Instead they tend to believe that wo[illegible]hould be the primary caretakers of their children.

The second statement addresses a similar issue, but in a slightly different way. It asks whether fathers should be allowed paternity leave. Although it may not be the best question, it does indirectly ask about male participation in a traditionally female domain. Over half of the men (51%) responded positively, as did 63% of women (Table 1). The fact that more women agree with paternity leave may be directly related to the 'overloaded' female role. Women may be assuming that the provision of paternity leave might provide them with some assistance in childcare.

The third statement, marriages are better if men are more active in the household, asks whether role reassignment affects marital relationships. This question appears to be eliciting a socially desirable response, since 85% of men and 90% of women agree. There does not appear to be a noticeable gender difference. It may be

that this positive response is more representative of the liberal ideology than an egalitarian gender-role belief. Certainly in a society that idealizes companionate relationships, marriages with two active members will be better. But, 'active' can mean many different things and not necessarily 'active in time-consuming household tasks'. Since equally active (active at least as defined by respondents) partners is the ideal, it may be expected that most people would respond favourably to this statement.

Age and Gender Effects

For the first statement, there is a positive relationship between traditional beliefs and age. For both men and women, those in the older (than 45) group were more likely to disapprove of working mothers of young children. Older respondents, who probably had young children some years earlier, might be responding to the question on the basis of their own prior behaviours. Or it may be that attitudes learned during an earlier era have remained intact: "That's how we did it, it worked, it must be right". One can see how older respondents might maintain such attitudes despite a changing world around them. Since their own children, raised by mothers who probably did not work outside the home, have generally grown up successfully, the traditional childrearing approach can be seen as the right one.

Similarly, for the second statement, those older than 45 were more likely to express negative opinions toward the concept of paternity leave. The gender difference observed for the total group was also seen within each age group. Particularly among those younger than 45, women were more likely (71%) than men (55%) to reply positively. This may reflect their personal difficulties with the reality of parenting role-overload. Since it is women who must take on the majority of childcare work, they may recognize more profoundly the need for male input when children are young.

Younger males (55%) responded more positively than did their older (40%) counterparts. This provides some evidence that younger, (perhaps more highly educated) men are making inroads into the 'traditional' female domain of childrearing (Stebbins, 1988).

Responses to statement three were overwhelmingly positive, as noted above. In every category, very few responded negatively. Those with the highest negative response were older men (10%). Those with the highest positive responses were women less than 45 years of age (91%).

In summary, most individuals agree that marriages would be better if men were more active (85% - 90%). Many also say that fathers should be allowed paternity leave (males 51%, females 63%). This is especially relevant for younger females (71%) who presumably best recognize the reality of the strain of parenting. But we can also see that traditional ideas regarding children and their care remain strong. Only a minority of women (30%) and men (25%) think that mothers of young children should be working outside the home. We can see that these ideas are more deeply entrenched within the older group.This is an important set of findings with respect to the conceptual framework elaborated in chapter two. If beliefs about the female childcare role are most resistant to change, then it is not all that surprising that women still feel pressure to assume the maternal role in addition to whatever else they do. Hence, both society and women themselves effectively create and re-create the strains of the 'double day'.

4.1.2 PROFILE OF GENDER ROLE BEHAVIOURS IN ALBERTA COUPLES, 1989

Household Division of Labour:

Table 2 displays the household division of labour reported by Alberta couples. Respondents are again separated by age and gender. As with gender-role beliefs, we would expect that older respondents would report a more traditional division of labour. However, unlike the pattern observed for beliefs (males having more traditional beliefs in some areas), we would not expect a gender difference in actual division of labour. The division of labour is a characteristic of the couple, and whether the respondent is female or male should not affect the actual division of labour. However, we would expect a gender difference in the reported division of labour, since previous research has shown that men overestimate the extent of their participation in household tasks.

Household tasks are classified in Table 2 by whether they are performed in a traditional or egalitarian manner. An egalitarian task division, as noted above, will be a situation of equal sharing or one where the male partner takes greater responsibility. Traditional task divisions will simply mean that the female partner performs the task.

Table 2 -Division of Household Labour of Couples by Age and Gender of Respondent, Alberta, 1989.

Task Division of Labour		Males			Females		
		Tot. %(n)	<45 %(n)	>45 %(n)	Tot. %(n)	<45 %(n)	>45 %(n)
Cooking	Traditional	63(237)	58(144)	73(93)	75(268)	73(169)	80(99)
	Egalitarian	37(141)	42(107)	27(34)	25(89)	27(64)	20(25)
		100(378)	100(251)	100(128)	100(357)	100(234)	100(123)
Dishes	Traditional	39(12)	38(83)	41(45)	61(178)	54(95)	72(83)
	Egalitarian	61(201)	62(135)	59(66)	39(115)	46(82)	28(33)
		100(329)	100(218)	100(111)	100(293)	100(177)	100(116)
Grocery	Traditional	39(152)	39(100)	40(52)	54(196)	55(132)	51(64)
	Egalitarian	61(234)	61(155)	60(79)	44(170)	45(108)	49(62)
		100(386)	100(255)	100(131)	100(366)	100(239)	100(126)
Clean	Traditional	51(179)	50(119)	55(60)	69(224)	65(135)	76(89)
	Egalitarian	49(170)	50(121)	45(49)	31(102)	35(73)	24(29)
		100(349)	100(240)	100(109)	100(326)	100(208)	100(117)
Laundry	Traditional	68(254)	63(156)	79(98)	83(288)	79(178)	91(110)
	Egalitarian	32(117)	37(91)	21(26)	17(59)	21(48)	9(11)
		100(371)	100(247)	100(125)	100(347)	100(226)	100(121)

Source: 1989 Alberta Survey

Gender Perception of Task Allocation:

The first most obvious finding in this table is the difference in perceptions of men and women regarding their individual behaviours. Since the male respondents represent a random sample of Alberta couples, as do the female respondents, one would expect similar results from male and female respondents, unless there is a gender-based reporting bias.

Males report more participation or egalitarian behaviours in every category. In total, across all ages, males report more egalitarian behaviours than do women in cooking (37% versus 25%), doing dishes (61%; 39%) grocery shopping (61%; 44%) cleaning around the house (49%; 31%) and, finally, doing laundry (32%; 17%). Women report more traditional patterns of household division of labour. It may be that because men are participating in household tasks, even a small amount of work leads them to overstate their involvement. By the same token, women doing the greater share may under-estimate the actual level of male contributions. Given the results of current research (Hochschild, 1989; Luxton, 1983, 1987; Coverman 1986; Bielby and Bielby, 1989; Armstrong and Armstrong, 1984), I think it is the former: men overreport their level of participation. Because women do the greatest share of the household work and have traditionally done so, it may be that their estimates are the more realistic of the two, since they know what is actually involved.

Males report the most involvement or egalitarianism in doing dishes and grocery shopping. Women also indicate that it is these tasks where more egalitarianism exists. However, as already noted, women do not report as much male participation in these tasks as men do. There is a clear gender-based reporting bias.

Interestingly, the gender difference in perceptions of behaviour is smallest for the task of cooking. For this task, the majority of both men and women report traditional allocations. More than the other tasks, cooking involves pre-planning preparation and task management. It is constantly in need of being done again and is closely linked with daily subsistence. The most 'female' of tasks is preparing food for the family.

In sum, these results suggest that men do not do as much household work as they say. Other research presents the same findings. Men are not doing half of what women do (Meissner, 1975; Hochschild, 1989; Armstrong and Armstrong, 1987). When men do participate in household work, they do so in a quantitatively and qualitatively different manner then do women.

Age Effects on Task Allocation

Among males 45 years of age or younger, 58% report a traditional task allocation, (i.e. women are doing the cooking in 58% of these households) and 42% report an egalitarian division of labour. Among older males, only 27% report egalitarianism in cooking. Laundry, like cooking, presents a similar pattern. Among women, only 27% of younger females report an egalitarian division of cooking. For older females 20% report an egalitarian situation. For laundry, again, younger women are more likely to describe an egalitarian division of labour.

Undeniably, there is an age effect. Although men and women of the younger group (less than 45) appear to be perceiving the amount of male participation

differently, the responses considered by age group are qualitatively different. It is the group of older women (greater than 45) who consistently report the greatest amount of traditional behaviours. Men of this group also report more traditional divisions of labour but to a less degree.

These reports probably have a lot to do with what was considered appropriate in the past. Older individuals probably started their households when traditional gender role expectations were less often questioned. Or it may be that individuals 'get this way' after having children. With years of practice, it is more difficult to change or want to change. These 'traditional' older individuals embody the behavioural manifestations of a patriarchal value-system.

Childcare Task Allocation

Table 2 does not tell us about the effect children might have on the division of labour. We can, however, consider this effect by examining the division of labour for childcare tasks. Table 3 considers all individuals who have children less than 12 years of age with respect to their division of childcare labour. Unlike Table 2 which offered age group comparisons, Table 3 ignores age differences because there are few 'older' respondents who would qualify. Still, data from a smaller sample of parents of young children provides valuable information for this research.

Table 3

Division of Childcare Labour of Couples with Children under 12 years of Age by Gender of Respondent, Edmonton, 1989.

a. Looking after Sick Children

Division of Labour	Males		Females		Total	
Traditional	72%	(34)	73%	(32)	73%	(66)
Egalitarian	28%	(13)	27%	(12)	27%	(25)
	100%	(47)	100%	(44)	100%	(91)

b. Arranging for Childcare

Division of Labour	Males		Females		Total	
Traditional	62%	(29)	75%	(33)	68%	(62)
Egalitarian	38%	(18)	25%	(11)	32%	(29)
	100%	(47)	100%	(44)	100%	(91)

Source: 1989 Alberta Survey

Table 3 shows that, with respect to caring for children who are ill, the task is highly traditional. Both male and female respondents typically report that it is the women who more often care for sick children. There is no gender bias in this finding, perhaps because the task is very clearly defined. Men cannot pretend to themselves that they stay home and care for sick children. Arranging childcare, however, is less clearly defined. Here we find a gender bias like that observed for cooking, cleaning and the other tasks considered in Table 2. It is easier for a male to think that he is doing his share in childcare arrangements, although his partner might disagree. Females in Table 3 are more likely then males (75% versus 62%) to report a traditional division of labour for childcare arrangements. However, the majority of both men and women agree (on both tasks) that it is women who must maintain the larger share of childcare labour. Given results such as these, it is not surprising that the 'maternal' role persists largely unchallenged in our society.

In sum, we have noted obvious age and gender effects when considering the impact of a patriarchal value-system on the division of household and childcare labour. But these effects mean different things. Males tend to over-report the egalitarian nature of the household division of labour, while older respondents are probably describing reality when they admit to a less egalitarian division of labour. Comparisons across tasks (taking age and gender into account) do indicate more egalitarianism in doing dishes and grocery shopping then in other household tasks. But when considering the division of childcare tasks, it is still found to be highly traditional.

4.1.3 PERCEPTIONS OF CAREER OPPORTUNITY, EDMONTON, 1989

The following table considers what respondents think is more important, work, family, or both, for themselves and for their spouse (Table 4). It also presents responses to questions about whether the family would move to allow for a) the respondent's and b) their spouse's career opportunities. Questions such as these examine the effects of a traditional value system in the most direct way. Do both men and women report equal support from their spouses and opportunities within their careers? These questions were asked only in Edmonton, and only of those in the paid labour force and living in couple relationships.

Table 4

Perceived Career Opportunities by Gender of Respondent, Edmonton, 1989

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
a) What's more important, respondent's job, family or both?						
Job	1	(1)	3	(2)	2	(3)
Family	84	(61)	83	(53)	83	(114)
Both	15	(11)	14	(9)	15	(20)
	100	(73)	100	(64)	100	(137)
b) What's more important, spouse's job, family or both?						
Job	0		13	(8)	6	(8)
Family	82	(60)	62	(40)	73	(100)
Both	18	(13)	25	(16)	21	(29)
	100	(73)	100	(64)	100	(137)
c) Both would move for respondent's career						
Yes	69	(50)	44	(28)	57	(78)
Maybe	9	(7)	14	(9)	12	(16)
No	22	(16)	42	(27)	31	(43)
	100	(73)	100	(64)	100	(137)
d) Both would move for spouse's career						
Yes	48	(35)	69	(44)	58	(79)
Maybe	20	(15)	17	(11)	19	(26)
No	32	(23)	14	(9)	23	(32)
	100	(73)	100	(64)	100	(137)

Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989

Family or Job?

What we see is that 84% of males and 83% of females report that family is most important to them. There is virtually no gender difference. Yet we know that the male breadwinner role is typically more important to men, while the family and the home are expected to be more important to women. It may be that, like the question about active partners in marriage, we are seeing a socially desirable response. While men may frequently act in a manner that shows their job is more important, saying that one's family is most important is the socially 'right' thing to say.

When we look at the respondents' perceptions of their spouse, we find something different. We find that men consider women highly committed to the family (82%), or to the family and their job (18%). None of the men said that their wives were more committed to their jobs. But 13% of the women reported that their spouse was more committed to his job and 25% said he was committed to family and work equally. Thus, there is evidence here, despite socially desirable responses, that men are more likely than women to put career ahead of family.

Will Family Move?

When we consider the second question about whether families would move for respondents' career opportunities and, secondly, for their spouses' career opportunities, we find both men and women acknowledging that it is the man's career that is the most important. Among male respondents, the family would be more likely to move (69%) for his own career than for his spouse's career (48%). Similarly,

female respondents are more likely to agree that the family would move for her husband's career (69%) then for her own (44%). This may be highly practical since he is more likely to have the better-paying job.

These results come closer to revealing the strength of a traditional belief system in directing gender role expectations and behaviour. While both men and women can say 'family comes first', movement to another location for male career opportunities is much more likely then movement for female opportunities.

Summing up these research findings, we see that only a minority of Albertans approve of women with children under three as labour force participants. We also find that women continue to perform most of the domestic and childcare tasks. We observe that the family is less likely to move for the women's career, and that women are considered by men to be highly committed to the family. Men also report that they are highly committed to the family, but women point out that men's jobs also play an important role in their self-identity. This fact comes out more strongly when we find that families are most likely to be re-located due to the man's career. These are strong indications of the persistence of 'traditional' patriarchal values.

In the next section, we will investigate the effects of gender-role attitudes on behaviour among the younger (18-44) group. This will limit the age or cohort effect when considering the impact of a patriarchal value-system. More importantly, it restricts the analysis to the group most likely to have young children present. As argued in the previous chapter, the presence of young children is the most important independent variable in this research project.

4.2 EXAMINING CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS IMPLIED BY THE THEORETICAL MODEL

Now that we have a clearer idea of the extent and impact of the traditional gender-role value system, we can focus specifically on its effects on the behaviours of members of the target population. We are also interested in other factors that affect behaviour. The amount of female labour force participation, the respondents' education level, whether there are children present, and the level of household income all potentially have an effect on the household division of labour.

The first part of this section treats gender role attitudes as internal constraints. In other words, we assume that an individual's attitudes have been shaped by socialization. This will allow us to consider the degree to which an egalitarian/liberal attitude influences behaviour in the home. We can then address the second research question, to what extent do ideas about appropriate gender roles influence the division of labour among those with and without children. We will then ask how female labour force participation influences the household division of labour.

The third part of this section introduces 'children' as the critical independent variable. A series of research questions about the effects of the presence of a child are examined. Some of these questions appear self-evident, but it is important to clarify and spell out the relationships implied by the conceptual framework developed earlier. The most important research question is how do those with children differ from those without in the way they divide their household labour. In other words, do couples with young children report a more traditional division of household labour?

4.2.1 THE EFFECT OF GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES ON THE DIVISION OF LABOUR

Table 5 considers the division of labour in housework (egalitarian or traditional) by the nature of gender-role attitudes held. These attitudes are considered to be a measure of more traditional/egalitarian beliefs. It is assumed, for example, that those who would agree that fathers should be allowed paternity leave, or that marriages are better if men are more active in domestic work, have more egalitarian attitudes. Similarly, agreement that women with small children have a right to be at work is taken to signify egalitarian beliefs.

Table 5

Household Division of Labour of Couples (18 to 44 years of age)
by Nature of Attitudes Held and Gender of Respondent

		Male Respondents			
			Household Division of Labour		
Opinion		Total % (n)	Mostly Trad. % (n)	Mixed % (n)	Mostly Egal. % (n)
a)Fathers*	Disag.	100(41)	27(11)	54(22)	19 (8)
should be	Neut.	100(21)	52(11)	29 (6)	19 (4)
allowed	Agree	100(56)	18(10)	45(25)	37(21)
paternity	Total	100(118)	27(32)	45(53)	28(33)
leave					
b) Marriage	Disag.	100 (8)	37 (3)	50 (4)	13 (1)
better if	Neut.	100(10)	30 (3)	40 (4)	30 (3)
men active	Agree	100(101)	26 (26)	46 (46)	28 (29)
	Total	100(119)	27 (32)	45 (54)	28 (33)
c) Working	Disap.	100(63)	35 (22)	48 (30)	17 (11)
women -	Neut.	100(27)	18 (5)	41 (11)	41 (11)
child <3	Appr.	100(29)	17 (5)	45 (13)	38 (11)
	Total	100(119)	27 (32)	45 (54)	28 (33)
		Female Respondents			
			Household Division of Labour		
Opinion		Total % (n)	Mostly Trad. % (n)	Mixed % (n)	Mostly Egal. % (n)
a)Fathers	Disag.	100(9)	67(6)	22(2)	11(10)
should be	Neut.	100(9)	67(6)	33(3)	0
allowed	Agree	100(68)	47(32)	31(27)	13(9)
paternity	Total	100(86)	51(44)	37(32)	12(10)
leave					
b) Marriage	Disag.	100 (1)	100(1)	0	0
better if	Neut.	100 (6)	67 (4)	17 (1)	17 (1)
men active	Agree	100(81)	49(40)	40(32)	11 (9)
	Total	100(88)	51(45)	38(33)	11(10)
c) Working	Disap.	100(44)	64(28)	27(12)	9 (4)
women -	Neut.	100(19)	32 (6)	47 (9)	21 (4)
child <3	Appr.	100(24)	42(10)	50(12)	8 (2)
	Total	100(87)	51(44)	38(33)	11(10)

*P <.01.
Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989.
Disag. = Disagree Disap. = Disapprove Appr.= Approve

Table 5, like earlier tables, highlights further the gendered perception of what goes on in the household. Men are more likely to say that their division of labour is mostly egalitarian. However, we want to go beyond this to see how gender role beliefs are related to the reported division of labour.

Males

Responses to the first statement, men should have the opportunity to take paternity leave, shows that males who agree, are significantly more likely to report a mostly egalitarian division of labour (37% compared to 19% of men with a neutral or negative response to this statement). Thus males are more likely to have (or at least report that they have) a mostly egalitarian division of labour if they have non-traditional views regarding appropriate gender roles.

A full 85% of men reported positive or egalitarian responses to the second attitude statement, marriages are better if men are more active in the household. Due to the overwhelming positive or egalitarian response produced by this 'socially desirable' statement, it is difficult to test the hypothesis. Nevertheless, we do find that men who disagree with this statement are less likely than those with neutral or positive responses to report a mainly egalitarian division of labour (13% versus about 30%). However, this difference is not statistically significant.

The third statement in Table 5 shows quite a different response pattern. Relatively few men (29 out of 119 or 24%) approve of young mothers working. A

large majority of men (63 of 119 or 53%) disapprove. In other words, they believe that mothers should be at home with their young children. Thus, the idea that women are primarily responsible for childcare remains largely unquestioned. Agreement with this statement might also mean the respondent thinks that a young mother will be an unreliable worker. But it probably taps directly into a general moral concern that a women with small children are not performing their 'mother' duties if they work away from the home.

Even though there is a low level of agreement with this third statement, the same relationship with the domestic division of labour is observed. For men with egalitarian or positive attitudes toward working mothers, 38% are mostly egalitarian in their reported division of labour. Only 17% of those who have more traditional views reported mostly egalitarian divisions of household labour.

Females

When we compare female responses for these statements, we find little effect of attitudes on reported behaviour. Overall, women are most likely to report traditional divisions of labour, regardless of their attitudes. Of the (68 or 79%) women who were in agreement with the first statement about paternity leave, 47% reported a mostly traditional division of labour. Of the mere 10% of women (n=9) who expressed a negative attitude toward paternity leave, 67% reported a mostly traditional division of labour. While these differences suggest that more progressive attitudes are associated with a more egalitarian division of labour, the differences are not significant.

The second attitude statement, marriage is better if men are more active in the household, shows overall egalitarian attitudes among women as it did for men. Almost all (92%) of the women agreed with this statement (Table 5). Of those women who expressed positive or more egalitarian attitudes, 49% reported traditional divisions of labour. Since only one individual held negative or traditional views, we cannot tell whether beliefs effect behaviour in this case. As for the third statement, there is no systematic relationship between responses to it and the division of household labour reported by women.

In sum, these data in Table 5 suggest that not all of these beliefs are equally accepted by men or by women. Some beliefs are much more acceptable than others. It is relatively easy to agree that marriages are better if men are more active in the household. On the whole, many individuals appear egalitarian in these attitudes. But beliefs about the mothers of young children working outside of the home show much less agreement among both men and women. This sentiment is clearly much more central to the traditional patriarchal belief system.

Secondly, women appear to have more egalitarian attitudes than men. But when considering attitudes about maternal employment, the differences are very small. Given their unequal share of the domestic division of labour, you would expect women to hold more egalitarian views in this area. But, almost as many women as men, in fact, a large majority of both, accept that a mother should stay home with her pre-school child. As already noted, this appears to be a core belief in the traditional gender-role value system.

Those reporting egalitarian beliefs about paternity leave were more likely to report an egalitarian division of labour. But this relationship was significant only for men. If men espouse egalitarian beliefs regarding gender roles, they may also act accordingly. However, if women are egalitarian in attitude, this need not lead to a more egalitarian division of labour. Without a husband with shared beliefs, it is unlikely that the household division of labour will take an egalitarian form.

When it gets down to the most fundamental of beliefs about the homemaker/mother role, there is much less agreement from both women and men. Assumptions regarding the care of children continue to be strongly influenced by a traditional value system. Such assumptions reinforce behaviour patterns and beliefs that male careers are more important. This finding has important implications for the core idea in the theoretical framework presented earlier, that is, that the presence of children produces a potential crisis situation regarding the allocation of household and childcare tasks.

But before we move on to deal specifically with the proposition that children can precipitate a task-demand crisis, the effect of female labour force participation on the household division of labour will be discussed.

4.2.2 THE EFFECT OF WOMEN'S LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION ON THE DIVISION OF LABOUR

As noted earlier, some of the relationships examined here are fairly self-evident. For example, we can propose that couples where the woman works full-time will have

a more egalitarian division of labour. Table 6 shows the household division of labour of couples age 18 to 44 according to the level of female labour force participation.

Table 6

Domestic Division of Labour of Couples (18 to 44 years of age) by Level of Women's Labour Force Participation and Gender of Respondent.

Women's Labour force Status	Male Respondents Total % (n)	Mostly Trad. % (n)	Mixed % (n)	Mostly Egal. % (n)
Not Employed	100(57)	30(17)	47(27)	23(13)
Part-time	100(14)	57 (8)	29 (4)	14 (2)
Full-time	100(48)	15 (7)	48 (23)	38 (18)
Women's Labour force Status	**Female Respondents Total % (n)**	**Mostly Trad. % (n)**	**Mixed % (n)**	**Mostly Egal. % (n)**
Not Employed	100(44)	59(26)	34 (15)	7 (3)
Part-time	100(20)	55(11)	40 (8)	5 (1)
Full-time	100(24)	33 (8)	42 (10)	25(6)

Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989

Before considering the proposed relationship, it is useful to note again the evidence of a gender-based perception bias in Table 6. Men under-report the degree to which their household has a traditional division of labour. In other words, men report

more participation in the household division of labour than women report about their male partners.

Given this reporting bias, there is some support for the proposition that those couples where the female partner works full-time will have a more egalitarian division of labour. Such divisions of labour are most common among couples where the female partner works full-time (38% of male respondents and 25% of female respondents). Traditional divisions of labour are more common when women work part-time or are not employed. One cannot be sure, of course, whether the household division of labour came about because of labour force participation, or vice versa. Both processes are probably at work.

The more egalitarian division of labour associated with increased paid employment is clearest when considering women. It may be that, since women do most of the housework, they are a better judge of whether or not their household operates traditionally. Women who work full-time were more likely (25%) to report egalitarian divisions of labour than those who worked part-time (5%) or those who were not employed (7%). Alternatively, full-time working women were least likely (33%) to say they had a traditional division of labour. This may reflect the difficulties in maintaining both a full-time job and a traditional division of labour in the home. Or, as implied above, women who insist on a more egalitarian household division of labour are also those who seek full-time employment outside the home.

Whatever the explanation, for women working full-time, receiving assistance in domestic tasks (or cutting back on some household tasks) is the most likely resolution of a difficult situation. As noted in the earlier discussion, when a woman

works full-time, there is more pressure on her partner to take some part in performing household tasks. However, when childcare is added to the domestic work load, the potential for a task-demand crisis is greatly increased. Unlike cleaning and other household tasks which can be postponed, young children present immediate time and energy demands.

4.2.3 THE PRESENCE OF CHILDREN

In this paper, the main causal factor is the presence of young children. In this section we consider the impact children have on the amount of female labour force participation, the nature of the household division of labour, the amount of strain and stress experienced in balancing work and family and, finally, the perception of one's career opportunities.

Women's Labour Force Status by the Presence of Children:

The theoretical framework suggests that once children arrive a task-demand crisis is often provoked. This can involve the upsetting of all prior notions of how family and work life should proceed. A new child frequently brings with it so much upheaval that, in order to cope, individuals often just rely on whatever works at the moment. It is a highly charged, stressful and confusing part of the family life-course for which individuals acquire little or no preparatory skills. Regardless of prior arrangements, or sensitivity to the arrangement regarding household tasks, the presence of children can have major repercussions on the division of labour and career opportunities.

In order to begin this analysis, female labour force participation is considered according to the presence of children in Table 7. Male and female respondents are not examined separately, since one would not expect a gender-based reporting bias with respect to objective characteristics such as the presence of children or the woman's labour force status. Again, the sample used at this point consists of 250 Edmonton individuals between the ages of 18 - 44 who are part of a couple. This age group is considered to be the one most likely to have young children.

Table 7

Women's Labour Force Status by Presence of Children (couples aged 18 to 44)

Women's Labour Force Status	Total % (n)	Childless % (n)	Pre-school % (n)	School-aged % (n)
Not employed	46(114)	49(62)	47(32)	35(20)
Part-time	16(40)	13(16)	10(13)	20(11)
Full-time	38(96)	38(48)	34(23)	45(25)
Total	100(250)	100(126)	100(68)	100(56)

Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989

Table 7 shows that 126 or 50% of respondents (aged 18-44) are childless, 68 (27%) have preschool children and 56 (23%) have school-aged children. Over half (54%) of the women in these couples are working for pay. Those with pre-school children are least likely to be working full-time (34%) while those with school-aged children are most likely to be working full-time (45%). Although the differences are small, childless women (49%) and those with pre-schoolers (47%) are most likely to not be employed. This finding does not reflect the traditional pattern whereby women leave the labour force once children are born and return once children enter the school system. Basically, we find that 65% of women with school-aged children are working either full or part-time, whereas only one half of the childless and those with pre-schoolers are working. What may in fact be happening here is that the childless non-working women include some young students and older women (up to age 44) who had children but never re-joined the labour force once their children left home. Unfortunately, the small sample size will not permit disaggregation of this group.

Division of Labour by the Presence of Children:

The next set of findings considers the impact of children on the couple's division of labour. Once again, male respondents are separated from female respondents because of the gender bias in reporting on the division of household labour.

Table 8
Domestic Division of Labour of Couples (age 18 to 44)
by the Presence of Children and Gender of Respondent

Male Respondents
Division of Labour

Presence of Child	Total % (n)	Mostly Trad. % (n)	Mixed % (n)	Mostly Egal. % (n)
Childless	100(69)	23(16)	48(33)	29(20)
Pre-school	100(31)	32(10)	39(12)	29(9)
School-aged	100(19)	32(6)	47 (9)	21(4)

Female Respondents
Division of Labour

Presence of Children	Total % (n)	Mostly Trad. % (n)	Mixed % (n)	Mostly Egal. % (n)
Childless	100(48)	46(22)	42(20)	12(6)
Pre-school	100(32)	57(16)	36(10)	7(2)
School-aged	100(12)	58 (7)	25 (3)	17(2)

Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989

In contrast to women without children, those with children are less likely to report a mostly egalitarian division of labour. However, the relationship is small and non-significant. There is no evidence in Table 8 that pre-school children contribute to a more traditional division of labour. As for men, those with pre-schoolers are no less likely to be egalitarian than those with school-aged children or those without children.

This result is surprising since we have predicted that a pre-school child would have a bigger impact on the division of labour. Although the theory and prediction may be questioned, I would argue otherwise. The answer to why pre-school children do not appear to have a larger effect probably lies in the fact that we are not controlling on other important variables. In Table 6, we found that if a woman has a paying job, there is a more egalitarian division of labour. Table 7 shows that women with young children are somewhat less likely to be working outside of the home. It may be that we need to take the level of women's labour force participation and other important variables into account before we can really see the effect children have on the household division of labour. In other words, a multivariate analysis is needed and is presented later.

Stress/Strain on the Job created by the presence of Children

As noted above, multivariate analyses may be needed to more clearly show how the presence of young children can change the household division of labour. However, the theoretical framework went beyond this to predict that children could provoke a task-demand crisis. The following analyses examine some aspects of such a crisis situation.

Table 9 provides information from employed male and female respondents as to whether they think their own job and their spouse's job is a strain on family life. Comparable information is provided for three groups, those who are childless, those who have pre-school children, and those who have school-aged children. The data are presented in this manner to determine whether dual-earner couples with children are most likely to report balancing difficulties.

Table 9

Percentage of Employed Respondents Agreeing that their Job and their Spouse's Job is a Strain on Family Life by Presence of Children and Gender of Respondent.

Presence of Child	Males		Females	
	Resp.'s Job % (n)	Spouse's Job % (n)	Resp.'s Job % (n)	Spouse's Job % (n)
Childless	6%(2/32)	13%(4/32)	13%(4/32)	6%(2/32)
Preschool	18(3/17)	12(2/17)	25(5/20)	25(5/20)
School-aged	20(3/15)	20(3/15)	10(2/21)	5 (1/21)
Total	13(8/64)	14(9/64)	15(11/73)	11(8/73)

Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989.

Although cell sizes are very small, some interesting patterns can still be found in Table 9. Women appear to distinguish between the effect of pre-school and school-aged children. When pre-school children are present, women are most likely to report that their own jobs (25%) and their spouse's jobs (25%) are a strain. The level of strain experienced becomes less for women when children are school-aged. Once children are in school it appears that life returns to some semblance of normality. Since women probably carried the biggest load when children were of pre-school age, they are more likely than males to notice the 'relief' when children reach school age. The fact that females reported highest levels of strain when pre-school children are present fits with the predictions of the theoretical framework.

Men, on the other hand, present a different pattern of results. If children (regardless of age) are present, all we see is a somewhat higher level of strain (due to the job). This strain may be related to the increased logistical demands for school-aged children who must often be taxied to and from activities. Perhaps, too, more men take on other parenting activities at this time.

Both male and female findings fit the theoretical model to some extent. For both men and women, childless couples report less strain. But, even among childless couples, it is the woman's job that is generally regarded as being the more difficult.

Perhaps because the question did not really clearly specify what was meant by 'severe strain', an overwhelming majority of working individuals (both men and women) did not consider their job or their spouse's job to be a strain at all. This is an unexpected finding. It may be that we are again seeing a socially desirable response. In light of the balancing difficulties that many couples are suspected of experiencing,

we may have here an indication of dissonance reduction. If an individual is having difficulty balancing work and family but is required to maintain both roles, perhaps for economic reasons, s/he may downplay the strain to reduce dissonance. The situation may be stressful, but the respondent is unwilling to label it a 'severe strain.'

Table 10 provides data on another dimension of balancing difficulty resulting from the division of labour. This table looks at those who have considered quitting their jobs. Contemplation of quitting may actually be a stronger indicator of stress and strain, since it refers to an actual anticipated response to work-family balancing difficulties. The data again address the central proposition that individuals with children will have greater balancing difficulties than those without children. Hence, we would expect parents of young children to be most likely to entertain thoughts of quitting their jobs.

Table 10

Percentage of Employed Respondents Agreeing that They or their Spouse have Considered Quitting their Job because of Balancing Difficulties by The Presence of Children and Gender of Respondent.

Presence of Child	Females		Males	
	Resp. % (n)	Spouse % (n)	Resp. % (n)	Spouse % (n)
Childless	6(2/32)	0(0/32)	13(4/32)	19(6/32)*
Preschool	29(5/17)	12(2/17)	10(2/20)	50(10/20)
School-aged	27(4/15)	7(1/15)	0 (0/21)	19 (4/21)
Total	17(11/64)	5 (3/64)	8 (6/73)	27(20/73)

Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989.

Overall, one in eight respondents reported that they had considered quitting their jobs because of balancing difficulties. In total, 17% of females and 8% of male respondents had considered quitting. When answering for whether they thought their spouse had considered quitting, 5% of the women and 27% of the men agreed. Quitting a job is a drastic response to a task-demand crisis. For many, quitting is an impossibility since it would mean a serious reduction in the standard of living. Hence, only a minority admitted thinking about quitting. However, we need to emphasize the fact that it is the women's job that is being considered less important. Women said they had considered quitting (17%) only half as often as did men (8%). Men said that their partner had considered quitting (27%) four times more often than did women (5%).

Women who have pre-school (29%) or school-aged children (27%) are most likely to have considered quitting. As for men, those with pre-school aged children were most likely to report (50%) that their female partners had considered quitting. Hence, it appears from Table 10 that the typical solution to strain/conflicts and demands caused by the presence of children, especially pre-school children, is that the woman should quit her job.

As suggested by the theoretical framework, when children arrive, difficulties in balancing task-demands, strain due to paid employment, and thoughts of quitting paid work become paramount among women who are typically expected to, and also personally expect to balance both employment and parent roles. The fact that males expect their partners to take on a more traditional role when small children are present indicates the strength of traditional gender-role beliefs coming into play at this critical time. We can speculate that if a more egalitarian division of labour is desired, it will

inevitably take a lot of effort from the individuals involved. In many cases, it may simply be easier to act within a traditional pattern.

So far, we have noted that a woman's level of labour force participation is related to the presence of young children. Next, we saw that the household division of labour is affected (albeit a small amount in the bivariate analysis) by the presence of children. We then went on to note that the impact of children is often translated into increased levels of stress and strain. In each case, assumptions and actual behaviour indicate a more adverse or negative affect on the woman when children were present.

We next consider the perceptions of career opportunities reported by men and women, and how these perceptions differ by the presence of children and the gender of the respondent. Our expectations are that a woman's career aspirations are more limited when children are a part of the family than when they are not. Although we cannot see change in individual couples, we can examine couples prior to assuming parent roles, during and after that transition. With this kind of before, during and after information, we can speculate regarding the change process through which an individual couple might go.

Perceptions of Career Opportunities by the Presence of Children:

To begin, the relative importance of work or family or a combination of the two is considered. Responses of women and men to this question were already presented in Table 4. Table 11 extends the analysis by comparing the responses of female and male respondents with and without children. According to the theoretical framework,

the expressed importance of the family for women and breadwinning for men should be accented when children are present.

Table 11

Relative Importance of Job and Family by Presence of Children and Gender of Respondent (employed respondents only)

	Male Respondent		Female Respondent	
	%	(n)	%	(n)
a) Childless respondents				
Job	3	(1)	3	(1)
Family	75	(24)	75	(24)
Both	22	(7)	22	(7)
Totals	100	(32)	100	(32)
b) Those with pre-school aged children				
Job	0		0	
Family	90	(18)	94	(16)
Both	10	(2)	6	(1)
Totals	100	(20)	100	(17)
c) Those with school-aged children				
Job	0		7	(1)
Family	91	(19)	87	(13)
Both	9	(2)	6	(1)
Totals	100	(21)	100	(15)

Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989.

Table 11 shows that, even when children are not present, the majority (75% of both men and women) say that family is more important than one's job. This is not surprising, given the high level of agreement with 'family' being important which was noted earlier. Once pre-school children are present, both men and women are even more likely to report family as being more important than their job (90% males, 94% females). When school-aged children are present, this remains much the same. Overall, the family comes out as being most important for all groups considered. As suggested earlier, this appears to be the socially desirable response.

When considering what respondents think is most important to their spouse, the relationship becomes more interesting. Table 12 shows that women more often report that their husband considers his own job as the most important. Childless women note that men place family first only 59% of the time, their job 16% of the time and both their job and family 25% of the time. The percentages change slightly when pre-school and school aged children are present. Somewhat more women (about two-thirds) now say that their husband places family first.

Men, on the other hand, consistently report that family is most important to women. They obviously see the appropriate female role as being in the home, especially when children are present. None of the male respondents felt that their wives put their jobs first, although some of them said that their wives thought of work and family as being equally important. Thus, the most interesting observation from Table 12 is that traditional assumptions about male and female interests remain strong, in spite of the social appropriateness of responses which place family above work.

Table 12

Respondent's Perception of Whether Job or Family is more Important to Spouse by the Presence of Children and Gender of Respondent. (employed respondents only)

	Male Respondent		Female Respondent	
	%	(n)	%	(n)
a) Childless respondents *				
Job	0		16	(5)
family	78	(25)	59	(19)
Both	22	(7)	25	(8)
Totals	100	(32)	100	(32)
b) Those with pre-school aged children				
Job	0		6	(1)
Family	85	(17)	65	(11)
Both	15	(3)	29	(5)
Totals	100	(20)	100	(17)
c) Those with school-aged children				
Job	0		13	(2)
Family	86	(18)	67	(10)
Both	14	(3)	20	(3)
Totals	100	(21)	100	(15)

* P<.05

Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989

Tables 13 and 14 show significant differences in the responses of men and women to questions about whether they would move to another location because of their own or their spouse's career. For childless respondents, Table 13 shows that men are more likely than women to say that they would move for their own career. Table 14 is the mirror image. Women say that they would move for their husband's career; men are less likely to say they would move for their wife's career. In short, male careers are more important.

Parents of school-aged children show a similar pattern to childless couples (Tables 13 and 14). Men would move sooner for their careers then they would for their spouse. When you ask about the spouse, you again get a reversal. Male careers come out as more important. It appears that for male careers, the presence of children is not likely to have much effect.

When we consider couples with pre-school aged children, we do not get the same gender reversals observed for childless couples and those with school-aged children. If you ask about the respondent's career (Table 13) there is a large gender difference - 85% of males and only 29% of females say they would move. As argued in the theoretical framework, the pre-school child years are also the 'get your career started' years. Men are keen to move (85%); women appear resigned to not move (29%) for their career. For men, the prospect of career running into family does not present much of a problem. But for women, a potential crisis is provoked.

Interestingly, in Table 14 when pre-school children are present, there are no important gender differences found (65% male vs. 59% female). This non-difference probably reflects the reality that more women know that they have to move for their

husband's careers (more income, it is how things are done, etc.) But men, having just noted that they would move for their career, are now forced to say the socially desirable thing when asked about their spouse. Thus, Tables 13 and 14 provide further evidence that the presence of pre-school aged children is a critical factor in affecting gender-role beliefs and behaviours.

Table 13

Family Will Move for Respondent's Career Opportunities by Presence of Children and Gender of Respondents. (employed respondents only)

	Male Respondent		Female Respondent	
	%	(n)	%	(n)
a) Childless respondents				
Yes	60	(19)	47	(15)
Maybe	12	(4)	19	(6)
No	28	(9)	34	(11)
Total	100	(32)	100	(32)
b) Those with pre-school aged children *				
Yes	85	(17)	29	(5)
Maybe	10	(2)	12	(2)
No	5	(1)	59	(10)
Total	100	(20)	100	(17)
c) Those with school-aged children				
Yes	67	(14)	53	(8)
Maybe	5	(1)	7	(1)
No	28	(6)	40	(6)
Total	100	(21)	100	(15)

* P<.01

Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989

Table 14

Family will Move for Spouse's Career Opportunities by Presence of Children and Gender of Respondents. (employed respondents only)

	Male Respondent		Female Respondent	
	%	(n)	%	(n)
a) Childless respondents *				
yes	34	(11)	69	(22)
Maybe	25	(8)	22	(7)
No	41	(13)	9	(3)
Total	100	(32)	100	(32)
b) Those with pre-school aged children				
Yes	65	(13)	59	(10)
Maybe	15	(3)	12	(2)
No	20	(4)	29	(5)
Totals	100	(20)	100	(17)
c) Those with school-aged children				
Yes	52	(11)	80	(12)
Maybe	19	(4)	13	(2)
No	29	(6)	7	(1)
Totals	100	(21)	100	(15)

* P<.01

Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989.

4.3 MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

Obviously, as indicated by the above findings, there are multiple factors to consider when trying to predict the impact children have on the household division of labour. By using a multiple regression procedure we can consider how several independent variables together affect this dependent variable. As noted above, the components of the domestic division of labour index were coded according to who performed the task, (0 if traditional and 1 if egalitarian). Since five tasks are included in the index, there is a maximum score of 5 for those who report themselves to be completely egalitarian in their household division of labour. Individuals reporting a completely traditional division of labour would have a score of 0.

Table 15 contains results from four multiple regression equations containing variables of theoretical importance. Each equation adds an additional set of independent variables to the analysis. For each equation, the first entry in each cell is the standardized regression coefficient (Beta) for the variable in question. Also contained in this table are the slopes (b) and standard errors (se) for these variables. The reduced sample size (n=137) is primarily a consequence of missing data.

Table 15

Domestic Division of Labour: Multiple Regression Equations

Variable	Statistic	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4
Gender	B	-.203*	-.308*	-.327*	-.301*
	b	-.328	-.469	-.468	-.459
	se	.123	.127	.129	.126
Age	B	-.229*	-.175*	-.176*	-.098
	b	-.026	-.023	-.023	-.013
	se	.011	.010	.010	.011
Wlfs	B	.174*	.190*	.198*	.133
	b	.160	.159	.160	.112
	se	.068	.066	.066	.068
Pater.	B		.246*	.290*	.252*
	b		.254	.254	.260
	se		.086	.086	.086
Male active	B		.078	.024	.044
	b		.144	.144	.082
	se		.146	.147	.145
Working moms	B		.011	.101	.157*
	b		.100	.101	.141
	se		.070	.071	.070
Education	B			.002	-.021
	b			.005	-.022
	se			.084	.082
Pre-school child	B				-.260*
	b				-.399
	se				.140
School-age child	B				-.141
	b				-.290
	se				.191
Adjusted R2		.13	.20	.21	.25

Betas (B), Slopes (b) and Standard Errors (se). (n=137) *P<.05

Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989.

In the first test, gender, age and the degree of female labour force participation were used to predict the nature of the household division of labour. According to the theoretical framework, those most likely to report an egalitarian division of labour would probably be younger individuals in couples where the female works full-time. Given the gender-based reporting bias, male respondents would also be more likely to report an egalitarian division of labour, controlling on the other variables in the equation.

The first regression equation supports these predictions. Gender has a negative effect (Beta= -.203). This means that males (coded 1) were more likely to report egalitarian division of labour. Women on the other hand (coded 2) were less likely to report an egalitarian division of labour. The effects of age are also negative (Beta = -.229). Older respondents are less likely to report an egalitarian division of labour. The degree of wife's labour force participation has a positive effect on the division of labour (Beta= .174). Thus, the more the female partner participates in the labour force (0=not in the labour force, 1=part-time, 2=full-time), the more likely the household division of labour will be egalitarian. Together, these three variables explain 13% of the variance in the dependent variable.

Gender-role attitude statements were added next in Test 2 as further predictors of the dependent variable. When attitudes are included, 20% of the variance is explained. An interesting finding is that the effect of gender is suppressed until you control on attitudes; it then increases from -.203 to -.308. Responses to the statement 'men should be allowed paternity leave' showed a significant positive effect (Beta= .246). Responses to the second statement, 'marriages are better if men are more active' showed a slight and non-significant positive effect. Since there was little variation in

response to this statement (90% of respondents agreed with it), one would not expect much of a relationship with the dependent variable. The third statement asks for approval or disapproval for working mothers of children less than three years of age. In this case, there is an even weaker positive effect (Beta= .011) than for the previous statement. This is surprising, given the general disapproval of this idea noted earlier. However, the effects of beliefs about 'working moms' are probably accounted for by other variables in the equation such as age and gender.

The only attitude statement that had a significant net effect on the division of labour was whether or not respondents thought men should be allowed paternity leave. Whereas some of the effects of the 'mothers working' question may have been accounted for by age, gender and wife's labour force participation, paternity leave may be introducing a new attitudinal dimension. This statement is more likely representative of 'progressive' attitudes and so may account for some of the additional variation in the domestic division of labour, controlling on other variables in the equation.

The level of the respondent's education was included next to see whether it affected the domestic division of labour (Test 3). A small positive non-significant relationship was found (Beta =.002). Thus, education does not appear to have a net effect on the reported household division of labour. However, the amount of variance explained increased by an additional 1%, mainly because the effect of 'paternity leave' increased from .246 in Test 2 to .290 in Test 3. This shows some further evidence of suppressed effects.

However, the main situational variable in this research is the presence of children. In examining the effect of this independent variable, two separate variables

were constructed. These two variables are the presence of pre-school children and children of school-age. When considering these key independent variables along with the rest, the explained variance reaches 25%. In addition, the attitude statement about working mothers of young children becomes a positive significant predictor (Beta = .157) of the domestic division of labour. Thus, it is only when the presence or absence of children is taken into account that the critical effects of beliefs about working mothers on the domestic division of labour become obvious. The other interesting change in Test 4 is that, with the addition of pre-school and school-aged children, age no longer has a significant negative effect on determining the division of labour. The presence of children is obviously related to age, making the effects of age spurious.

The most important finding to note in this regression equation, however, is that it is pre-school children that show the strongest negative impact on the division of labour (Beta = -.260). Couples with pre-schoolers are less likely to have an egalitarian division of labour, even after taking gender-role attitudes, age, education, and female labour force participation into account. This clearly supports the theoretical model.

4.4.1 INCOME AS A CONDITIONING VARIABLE

Finally, to what extent does the household division of labour vary by social status? Table 16 examines the impact of household income, as an interacting variable, on the relationships discussed above. The interactive effect of income was shown to be influential in predicting a woman's labour force behaviour by Lowe and Krahn (1985). In this analysis, income as a measure of class or life-chances was also considered important in predicting the division of labour in the household. Due to the small

number of cases, the sample of couples was separated into two groups on the basis of household income. The high income group consists of families with incomes $50,000 and greater. This group comprises 49.8% of the target population. Those of the lower income group comprise 50.2% of the population and earn less than $50,000. Table 16 displays the final multiple regression equation from Table 15, separately for high and low-income households.

Table 16

Domestic Division of Labour: Multiple Regression Equation for High and Low Income Households.

Var.	Statistic	Test 1-Low Income	Test 2 -High Income
Gender	B	-.219	-.294*
	b	-.350	-.427
	se	.222	.165
Age	B	.190	-.303*
	b	.030	-.039
	se	.026	.015
Wlfs	B	-.056	.176
	b	-.050	.141
	se	.119	.088
Pater.	B	.237	.288*
	b	.303	.248
	se	.173	.099
Male active	B	-.082	.055
	b	-.131	.117
	se	.217	.233
Working moms	B	.150	.190
	b	.140	.160
	se	.118	.093
Education	B	-.196	.067
	b	-.206	.072
	se	.137	.116
Pre-school child	B	-.471*	-.222
	b	-.753	-.332
	se	.282	.180
School-age child	B	-.432*	-.045
	b	-1.149	-.074
	se	-.476	.211
Adjusted R2		.26	.34

Betas (B), Slopes (b) and Standard Errors (se). *P<.05

Source: Edmonton Area Study, 1989.

Table 16 shows that, for the low-income group, it is the presence of children that makes the difference. Both pre-school (Beta = -.471) and school-aged (Beta = -.432) children show strong negative effects on the division of labour. Low-income couples with young children have a more traditional division of labour than do childless couples with similar incomes. For the high-income group, gender (Beta = -.294), age (Beta=-.303) and attitudes toward paternity leave (Beta= -.288) are shown as significant predictors of the division of labour. The presence of children is of less consequence for the household division of labour among these more affluent couples.

The fact that gender, age and attitudes toward paternity leave are the only significant variables predicting the division of labour among those of high incomes is interesting. Presumably, it is in this group that individuals are allowed the luxury of choice, simply because they can afford it. As noted earlier, it is women in high-income households who can afford to opt out, provide early childcare, and commit themselves more fully to a traditional role and its behaviours. It is also these individuals who can enjoy the luxury of having their personal opinions and beliefs guide their actions.

For the low-income group, the older the respondent, the greater the likelihood that the division of labour will be egalitarian. However, this effect is small and non-significant. Within the high-income group, it becomes negative and significant. This suggests that among those more affluent, younger couples are more likely to have an egalitarian division of labour. This result is not altogether surprising. Younger males tend to have higher levels of education which may contribute to the development of egalitarian attitudes.

Since we have noted earlier that an egalitarian division of labour is more conditional on the level of male egalitarian attitudes, and that higher education and higher incomes are known to be highly correlated, younger individuals of higher income levels should, in fact report more egalitarian divisions of household labour.

However, what is most important in this table is that the negative effect of children on the domestic division of labour declines as family income increases. Obviously, the magnitude of the effect of the presence of children varies by social status. Additional income can alleviate some of the strains and conflicts precipitated by the addition of young children to the family and can consequently allow a more egalitarian division of labour.

In other words, socio-economic status affects the ability to balance the household division of labour. The more affluent can afford to buy services such as good quality childcare, housekeeping, and food services. Women in such households are also more able to temporarily assume fully the maternal role if they so choose. Higher income women may reconcile themselves temporarily to a more traditional role pattern because they believe it is required at the pre-schooler stage in the family life course. For whatever justification, higher income individuals can afford the luxury of 'choice' or having their ideals guide their actions.

These findings support the theoretical model developed in chapter two. First, children do effect the household division of labour and can provoke a 'task- demand crisis' for young parents. Second, the overall effect that children have on the division of labour can be moderated by the availability of financial resources.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 IMPLICATIONS: GENDER-ROLES, CHILDREN AND THE TASK- DEMAND CRISIS

The findings above reveal that traditional gender-role attitudes and behaviours are still very pervasive. Women are expected to conform to homemaker/ childcare roles and men to breadwinner roles. This places men and women in very different positions when it comes to gaining opportunities and rewards in the workplace. While access to better jobs is related to merit it is also a function of social category membership. These findings force us to question the liberal ideology that insists that merit is the primary basis of workplace social hierarchies.

Today the majority of women are labour force participants (Parliament, 1989; Moore, 1989; Boyd, 1984). Because women are expected to conform to traditional domestic roles, they are placed in a very difficult situation. For in addition to paid employment, most women today continue to maintain full domestic responsibility. The severity of the situation hinges on available family resources and the woman's ability to convince her male partner to provide assistance. This study showed that female egalitarian attitudes did not influence the household division of labour. But men who held egalitarian attitudes were more likely to report egalitarian domestic divisions

of labour. In other words, in a relationship where the woman has been carrying the largest share of the work, her recognition of the unfairness of the situation is not sufficient to produce change. Obviously, the male has to become aware and convinced of the same situation before change can occur.

Of course, simply reporting an egalitarian division of labour does not make it equitable, for a gender-based perception bias was also found. Compared to the reports of their female partners, men were more likely to say they played an active part in household tasks. One could argue that women under-estimate male contributions, but the opposite is more likely to be true. This finding is similar to others reported in the literature. Women actually perform most of the household work. Where men 'help' or 'assist' the amount and frequency is quite different from that confirmed by their partner (Hochschild, 1989; Parliament, 1989b; Stebbins, 1988; Robinson, 1986).

These findings do not provide us with much hope that women receive assistance in the home. Rather, we are provided with further validation of the existence of the 'double day'. We also have seen how the experience of the 'double day' is most difficult for career women who have younger children. We found that when young children were present, a higher overall percentage of families had a traditional division of labour. As noted above, this finding reflects the experience of women in the larger society. Most women combine paid work and family responsibility (Bielby and Bielby, 1989). The fact that women are expected to take on a more traditional gender-role when small children are present is further evidence of the strength of traditional gender-role ideology. If a negotiated equitable division of labour is desired, it will take a lot of effort from the participants involved. The results from this thesis suggest

that some individuals may find it easier to act within traditional gender-role patterns to avoid further conflict at an already difficult period of time. This finding is very similar to that noted by Luxton (1986) and referred to in chapter two of this thesis. Some women may not request a task re-distribution because it is more likely to result in a tension- generating manipulative power struggle than in a re-distribution of tasks.

Traditional gender role ideology places a great weight on women when young children are present. For those woman who are trying to 'get a career and a family started' and balance the demands of both, how can anything but a 'task- demand crisis' occur? Without assistance in the home, the tasks and responsibilities demanded of a woman attempting to balance both a family and a career can produce a very stressful, highly charged, impossible situation. Evidence of this stressful situation among couples with young children has been shown.

It follows then, that it is the woman's career that is more often questioned when families experience the additional stress and strain brought on by children. Even though working mothers have become a permanent labour force category, their labour force participation is still questioned by many who believe that mothers of young children belong with their children in the home (Krahn and Lowe, 1985; Alberta Women's Secretariat, 1989; Bozinoff and MacIntosh, 1989). Canadian society appears to expect women to bear the cost of reproducing the next generation, in terms of actual wages lost during maternity leave and also career opportunities lost due to social expectations regarding the mother's primary role. Given that most women must work for economic viability and also wish to work for personal fulfillment, the presence of a young child necessarily leads to contradictions, stresses and strains.

When couples attempt to reduce the stresses and strains of balancing work and family, it is again the woman's career that is called into question. A woman is more often expected to quit her job. Families are more willing to relocate for male career opportunities than for female career opportunities. Both of these responses are particularly damaging during the 'get your career started' years. These data did not allow an in-depth look at the way in which children affect female and male careers over time, as in a longitudinal design. But given what we know of the existing labour market and perceptions of female labour force attachment, we can easily predict what the overall affect might be. Over time, women's career opportunities will be negatively affected whereas men's careers will remain unaffected.

When we considered the additional effect of social status (measured by family income), we found that those women who were already disadvantaged in low to medium income ranges, and who could less afford to buy services to alleviate the strain, were those most affected by the presence of pre-school children. Controlling on other relevant variables, the presence of young children in these households was associated with a more traditional division of domestic labour. This means that women in the lower-income groups more often are forced under difficult time, energy and financial constraints to try to balance their work and family lives by themselves.

Women in higher-income households are able to reduce conflicts and stresses by buying services. Obviously, relative life-chances can moderate the experience of the 'double day' and 'task-demand' crisis. But access to surplus income or enhanced life-chances do not change the fundamental problem. Employed mothers are

overloaded and men do not share equal responsibility in tasks considered to be traditionally female. Most women continue to work the 'double day' (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1984). This problem is deeply rooted in our ideas about family, men, women and children. Women are expected by their partners and their employers to behave according to traditional role assumptions.

This thesis has shed some new light on the negative impact that traditional gender-role attitudes have on the household division of labour when small children are present. It underlines the importance of considering children when addressing questions regarding the household division of labour. The thesis has also examined the effect of traditional beliefs on perceptions of female labour force opportunities. Again, the importance of the child and assumptions regarding the maternal role are stressed.

The act of putting the child at the center of discussion can add much explanatory power to research. It draws together diverse subject areas and provides a very important link for understanding more of the complexity of social life. It also leads us to conclude that something must be done. Women cannot be expected to cope with the 'lion's share' of housework and childcare responsibility with little male assistance. By the same token, men cannot expect to continue providing minimal assistance. Similarly, we cannot continue to blindly believe that men and women pursue labour market opportunities with equal probabilities of success. Given that traditional gender-role ideology produces a crisis in the home for many young parents, and has a negative impact on the woman's career opportunities, the negative impact of the traditional gender-role value system can no longer be ignored. Only by tackling at many levels

the problem of gender inequality, of the overloaded female and uninvolved male, can substantial change occur.

5.2 POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

Social institutions such as the media, recreation, religion, education, government and the labour market all act to teach, support and perpetuate traditional gender-role beliefs and behaviours. Institutionalized gender-roles support the perpetuation of an inequitable division of labour in the home and unequal access to opportunities in the social world. We must, therefore, challenge these social institutions to enact change. Inaction will only perpetuate the pervasive effects of a highly patriarchal gender-role ideology.

Obviously, there are a number of social policies and organizational programs suggested by the findings of this research. We will discuss in detail only those most crucial to this research project, i.e., the learning of family roles within the educational system, and employment legislation and policies related to work and family issues.

There is much that can be done to alleviate stresses, strains and difficulties at the work/family interface. We must begin within the family by challenging the notion that individuals must occupy gender-specific roles and that these roles do not require training because they are 'natural.' Instead we all need to recognize that couple-formation and parenting are <u>not</u> 'natural.' Like other social roles, they must be learned. The question is how? My suggestions of ways to correct the imbalance in the domestic division of labour challenge several major social institutions and, simultaneously, the individuals within them. Since this research project has focussed

on the family, specifically the division of labour when children are present, our discussion of educational policy/program implications will begin there.

5.2.1 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

My first suggestion is to consider more carefully how gender-roles are learned. A primary social institution in which this occurs is the education system. I recognize that the educational system is a very big subject area and that study of the learning and perpetuation of traditional gender-role attitudes within it requires a thesis on its own. My comments are, therefore, very specific to two main ideas in this thesis, children and the division of labour.

We need to introduce the concept of 'family' within the educational curriculum. We can do this by expanding the now gendered courses of home economics and health to include parenting skills, household management and how to maintain and nurture family relationships. In addition to expansion of subject area content, we need to remove the gendered enrollment of these courses. This can be accomplished by making family-related courses mandatory for all students just as Mathematics and English are now required in the current system.

The home economics courses could have a very practical component, if daycare centres were set up within the schools. First, students who are learning care-giving skills can get 'hands on' experience if paired up with a toddler/pre-schooler. This is a potential benefit to the learning of care-giver skills for the older students and social skills for the pre-school children. An additional important benefit is realized by the

parents of the pre-school child. The introduction of such a program may allow parents the opportunity to solve their immediate child-care concerns and to have access to state-run and regulated, quality and affordable child-care.

If all boys and girls were to learn more egalitarian values throughout their educational programs, they would be less surprised by the effects of actual family task and role requirements later. Through the type of learning suggested, boys and girls would develop flexibility in attitude and hence the ability to anticipate and deal with unplanned family dilemmas. An example of such a dilemma is deciding who will stay home when a child is ill. Parents with flexible attitudes may alternate this responsibility because they recognize the career costs to the individual who assumes this duty all the time. In addition, students would gain many of the necessary task skills needed in family life such as parenting, household management, and problem solving. Both men and women would have the ability to learn of what each task entails in terms of time, effort and how to actually perform it. I am suggesting that with early exposure to this new form of learning, men and women will handle better the stresses and strains provoked by the task-demand crisis, and will be better able and more willing to re-negotiate tasks as required.

5.2.2. EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

Employment legislation and policies, like educational programs, have powerful social influences over individuals. If altered, these programs and policies could contribute greatly to the project of gender-role equality .

Family Dependent Care

To begin, we must develop ways to acknowledge the work that primary care-givers perform in parenting, household management and maintenance roles as important contributions to our society. This is not to say that we should celebrate false visions of the 'traditional' family. Instead, we must realize the important social contribution being made by family care-givers and provide some form of compensation for it. What springs immediately to mind is the expansion of cash payments or subsidies to families to help defray the high costs of childcare. Other examples of financial compensation are additional tax-breaks and/or subsidies or homemaker pensions.

One of the main shortfalls which this thesis highlights is the serious need for additional dependent care options. Large employers could offer childcare services, on-site or near-site. Employers could also initiate a form of income supplement provided to parents. Or they could provide a reference listing of available services near or convenient to the worksite.

This type of program can be encouraged by governments. As noted earlier, the Government of Canada could provide a higher level of childcare subsidies to a greater number of low-income individuals. The government could also provide a number of tax-incentives to make it more attractive for new child-care operations to open.

There are subsidies currently available to a limited number of low-income families. Additional funds should be made available so that a greater number of parents who need subsidy could receive it. Direct payments could also be made to daycares to

keep user-fees down. Another useful scheme is to expand the use of private home daycare options as a means of providing care for parents who work shifts or other non-conventional schedules. In a day-home, a child could receive better care in terms of the lower caregiver to child ratio but also could receive care at odd hours. While some parents might prefer this option because of its flexibility, others might like it because care is given in a home and not an institution.

We must all pay more attention to the child/dependent care issue. It is a public concern. Only by taking on some of the responsibility for the next generation of workers, can we give this generation a fair employment experience. Women must be relieved of the private burden of caring for dependents. This caring assignment has a detrimental effect on their employment roles and opportunities and, as this thesis has documented, also contributes to their 'double day' of work.

Extended Leave Provisions

In addition to the great need to re-consider dependent care services, we must examine extended-leave provisions which can also meet the needs of working parents. Provisions of leaves of absence (paid or unpaid) beyond maternity/paternity leaves are now a policy issue. There is a growing recognition that a national system of fully-paid child birth/care leave is a necessary part of any policy package designed to enhance women's labour force participation (Townson, 1985). Some progress has been made. With the Bill C-21 amendments, both parents can now take parental leave of up to 10 weeks to care for infant children. This may be taken by men or women but it is not intended to replace the insurable 17 weeks of recuperative maternity leave provided to women.

Another extended-leave provision is 'nurturance' leave. This type of leave is currently provided to federal government employees. Parents can take leaves of absence for childcare reasons for up to five years after the child is born. One intention of this leave is to allow parents of pre-schoolers and junior school-aged children time to provide care over the summer months. Although available to men and women, this type of leave is more often taken by female parents. On the surface, few men appear interested. It may be that they are more profoundly affected by the 'breadwinner' role. We have discussed possible reasons for this in the body of the thesis. Only when we allow and encourage both men and women to take advantage of extended-leave provisions to care for children or other dependents can we move closer to our egalitarian ideal. Currently, women are the likely recipients of extended leave provisions which helps them alleviate some of the strain they experience. Although this is a good solution to a difficult problem, it is really only solving half of the problem. The real inequity problems of shared family responsibility are not being addressed.

Pay Equity

The shortfall in the sharing of family roles may be related to the lower level of female salaries in the labour force. The family roles may be divided according to some notion of resource equity. That is, if the male partner earns more, his contribution to the family may be considered greater than that of his female partner who may work as long and as hard for pay, but is paid less. The female's contribution to the family therefore may include paid work outside of the home, but because of her lower earnings, her work in the home is maintained. Couples may use this line of logic to justify a traditional and unfair division of labour.

Government action such as the implementation of a national pay-equity bill could make a big difference. With a national pay equity bill, choices made within the family regarding the division of paid and unpaid working hours over time may cease to be in favour of male employment when family crises occur. This means that if women were paid equitably, fewer might reduce their labour force activities when experiencing work-family balancing difficulties. Instead, they might insist that their male partners perform a larger role in the division of household labour.

Benefit Policies

Employment policies such as flexible benefit packages and alternative work schedule programs can also help women and men balance their work and family responsibilities. Typically employment policies such as these are found in larger organizations. The following suggestions tend to ignore those employed in secondary labour markets. The fact that few suggestions address these less advantaged workers is not intended to suggest that these individuals are any less important.

An initial approach for provision of more flexible benefits, (such as extended leave provisions and dependent care) is to unlink benefit policies from the legislated definition of the family. This would allow those in non-traditional families the ability to provide benefit coverage to whom they define as their dependents (Woodruff, 1990). Examples of non-traditional families include reconstituted families, homosexual couples, or non-married couples with and without children. A situation of non-coverage for defined dependents could in itself be stressfull and so magnify the task-demand crisis.

Another approach is to provide a 'cafeteria-style' benefit package. This is a relatively new benefit innovation. With a cafeteria plan an employee can pick and choose the benefits that suits them best. For example, dual-earner families could pick the best package to optimize coverage between partners. Where one individual chooses dental and health-care, the other may choose child-care subsidy/service or even opt for extra cash each month. For those in the lower income levels, extra cash may allow added flexibility to purchase services to alleviate strains experienced in balancing work and family.

Alternative Work Arrangements

The provision of alternative work arrangements is another way to help working mothers and fathers achieve a better balance of their work and family lives. Alternative work schedules are a popular solution with many employers due to the low cost factor. Presumably, the employer can get 'the best deal' in terms of productivity and commitment gain by giving back 'a good deal' in terms of work alternatives and flexibility.

One example of an alternative work arrangement is job-sharing where two individuals share equally the benefits and responsibilities of one full-time position. Parents wanting to spend more time with their young children might find job-sharing attractive since they would work less but still maintain job security and some benefit packages. However, job-sharing has also been used to reduce an employer's costs. Also, the job-share position, like many other part-time positions, can sometimes mean a

reduction in job security and career opportunities for the individuals involved. However, job-sharing remains an attractive alternative for some. The main advantage of this employment alternative for women is the ability to balance traditional role expectations with a paid labour force position (Pupo, 1989). But, while job-sharing can be a viable alternative to the overloaded 'double day' it does not address the main problem, i.e., the sharing of responsibility between men and women in the home. It merely allows the overloaded female a better time arrangement to perform her dual role (Pupo, 1989).

Two other popular employment arrangements are flex-time (employee chosen start and stop times) and compressed work week (employees work longer hours for time off). Both of these alternatives appear to lead to lower employee turnover and absenteeism as well as higher morale (Newman, 1989). Again, these two alternatives allow women more flexible schedules to fit in all of their conflicting demands more effectively. Unlike job-sharing, men do take part in these alternative work programs. However, the benefit realized is often more leisure time rather than more time for domestic work.

Employee Assistance Programs

Stress-reducing programs such as health and fitness and time-management programs may be useful to working parents. These programs would provide those who are experiencing the task-demand crisis with new information on how to cope more effectively. However, the typical program of this nature places the onus for solving the problem on the individual 'victim' without recommending organizational or structural changes. Formally-organized mutually-supportive relationships can also help

alleviate stress. These could take the form of 'brown bag' luncheon group meetings or support group meetings. Often stress can be reduced through talking with other individuals who have experienced similar problems. Employers could do more to encourage both men and women to take advantage of available programs such as this. Such a message would help promote a more active male role in childcare.

Programs encouraging males as well as females to take part in domestic and childcare responsibility roles are more likely to be found within larger work organizations. Individuals who work for smaller organizations do not often have access to any of these work-place alternatives or benefit packages. Given that women in lower-income families experience more difficulty and stress when children are present, the lack of extra income, employee programs and affordable child care services, can only lead to more difficulty coping with the 'task demand crisis'.

5.3 FUTURE RESEARCH

My suggestions for change in employment programs and policies have tended to ignore those employed in secondary labour markets. For many people employed in smaller work organizations such as those in the lower level service sectors, benefits like those described above are an unknown luxury. Perhaps their problems can be at least partially addressed through legislative action. For example, governments could provide smaller work organizations with tax incentives to create employee benefit programs that model those in the larger organizations. Since the service sector is the expanding portion of the labour market, there is room for more policy-related research and discussion in this area.

In short, further research is needed on policy and program development to re-structure work and work-place relationships to allow individuals to better balance their work and family lives. In addition, further on-going educational programs within and external to the work-place, encouraging an equitable division of household and childcare tasks, need exploration.

This thesis demonstrates the need for more research specifically designed to uncover the range of problems caused by continued adherence to traditional gender-role ideology. It would be interesting to ask questions regarding the division of labour, the presence of children and career impacts of individuals in different cultural and racial groups. Since some cultural and racial groups are more patriarchal than others variations in expectations and experiences across different social groups could be very interesting. Given the high level of immigration to Canada, from non-traditional countries, this question becomes even more critical.

Most importantly, what this thesis highlights is the need to take a closer look at work and family conflicts arising when young children are present. This could be achieved through a more in-depth, longitudinal study examining the effect a child has on a couple's household division of labour. In the same vein, further in-depth research is needed on the impact that alternative childcare arrangements, or a couples' socio-economic status might have on the task-demand crisis.

Finally, methodological triangulation should be used. A qualitative analysis could be added to this quantitative study in an effort to gain considerably more insight.

We should look very closely at exactly how the presence of children provokes a situation of crisis and then exactly how , or in what ways, the crisis limits female careers. Armed with knowledge of this sort we could provide important insights into why programs designed to help women balance their work and family lives sometimes only act to further limit their careers.

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